J. E. HORAN
NO.....

LYOF N. TOLSTOÏ

XVI

MASTER AND MAN

THE KREUTZER SONATA

DRAMAS

C. Copeland 98

THE NOVELS AND OTHER WORKS OF

LYOF N. TOLSTOÏ

MASTER AND MAN

THE KREUTZER SONATA

DRAMAS

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1899

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INTRODUCTION

With the exception of the fragments of the unfinished novel, "The Dekabrists," which are really studies of character, sketches to serve, and therefore suitable to place anywhere, though the scheme of the story had it been finished would have put it immediately after "War and Peace," the contents of the present volume are in accordance with Count Tolstoï's latest teaching. "Master and Man" represents selfishness conquered by self-sacrifice, and thus bringing joy even in death. It may be questioned whether the master's fear lest, in case his man perished, he should be held responsible for him, does not throw a cynical tinge over the sudden resolve of the half-dazed, half-frozen speculator to protect his servant from the snow and frost. But the lesson is almost as vital. And with what vividness the horrors of a blizzard on the steppes are portrayed.

The "Kreutzer Sonata" has probably been more misunderstood than any other of Count Tolstoï's writings. The ravings of a man self-confessed insane have been taken as the personal views of the author of the monologue. The subject is not agreeable, the narration is exasperating, the whole thing is a study in morbidity. Yet underneath the murderer's confession, underneath the insane extravagance, is the Christian teaching in regard to sexual morality. Christ's teaching is either right or wrong. There is no mincing matters, and this Count Tolstoï shows in his postscript to the "Kreutzer Sonata," the translation of which is due to Mr. Aylmer Maude of England, whose long residence in Russia and friendship with Count Tolstoï make him an authority on his philosophy.

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In one of his educational articles Count Tolstoï speaks of a hitherto unrealized plan of writing a story or a play on some proverb, such as is to be found in Snegiref's Collection. He afterward carried out the idea in the play entitled "Vlast Tmui," the Power (or Dominion) of Darkness (or Evil), which has a proverb for its secondary title. This drama, written wholly in the crabbed staccato speech of the Tula peasant, has, nevertheless, an enormous tragic impulse, which places it on a level with the ancient Greek tragedies. There are certain scenes also, as that, for instance, where the reformed drunkard — the laborer, Mitritch — and the little girl, Anyutka, are talking, while the father and grandmother of the illegitimate baby are murdering it, which in their weird and gruesome suggestiveness remind one of the work of Maeterlinck or Ibsen. If this play could be translated into the Cornish or Dorset dialect, or even into the dialect of New England, it would gain immensely. But even then, while there would be increased and perhaps adequate quaintness, the conciseness of the peasant speech could not be given, and Akim's halting utterance, with its amusing repetition of *tayo* and *znatchit*, would fare but ill. Yet it is Akim, the God-fearing, simple-minded peasant, whom Tolstoï makes the moral figure of the play, and his principles triumph in the end.

In the comedy which follows and ends the volume Count Tolstoï holds up to ridicule the empirical weaknesses of medicine and such fads as hypnotism, spiritualism, and the like. As usual he contrasts the absurdities of a narrow and superficial culture with the sterling sense and unaffected reason of the man of the people living near to nature, and not worried over microbes and bacilli. The humor of the play is legitimate and characteristic; one can easily believe that it was effective when presented on the stage.

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MASTER AND MAN

(1895)

CHAPTER I

IT happened in the seventies, in winter, on the day after St. Nicholas' Day.[1] There was a holiday in the parish, and the village landowner and second-guild merchant, Vasili Andreyitch Brekhunof, could not be absent, as he had to attend church — he was a churchwarden — and receive and entertain friends and acquaintances at home.

But at last all the guests were gone, and Vasili Andreyitch began preparations for a drive over to see a neighboring landed proprietor about buying from him the forest for which they had been bargaining this long while. He was in great haste to go, so as to forestall the town merchants, who might snatch away this profitable purchase.

The youthful landowner asked ten thousand rubles for the forest, simply because Vasili Andreyitch offered seven thousand. In reality, seven thousand was but a third of the real worth of the forest. Vasili Andreyitch might, perhaps, even now make the bargain, because the forest stood in his district, and by an old standing agreement between him and the other village merchants, no one of them competed in another's territory. But Vasili Andreyitch had learned that the timber-merchants from the capital town of the province intended to bid for the Goryatchkin forest, and he decided to go at once and conclude the bargain. Accordingly, as soon as the feast was over, he took seven hundred rubles of his own

[1] Winter St. Nicholas' Day is December 6 (O.S.).

from the strong box, added to them twenty-three hundred belonging to the church, so as to make three thousand, and, after carefully counting the whole, he put the money into his pocket-book and made haste to be gone.

Nikita, the laborer, the only one of Vasili Andreyitch's men who was not drunk that day, ran to harness the horse. He was not drunk on this occasion, because he had been a drunkard, and now since the last day before the fast, when he spent his coat and leather boots in drink, he had sworn off and for two months had not tasted liquor. He was not drinking even now, in spite of the temptation arising from the universal consumption of alcohol during the first two days of the holiday.

Nikita was a fifty-year-old muzhik from a neighboring village; no manager,[1] as folk said of him, but one who lived most of his life with other people, and not at his own home. He was esteemed everywhere for his industry, dexterity, and strength, and still more for his kindliness and pleasantness. But he never lived long in one place, because twice a year, or even oftener, he took to drinking; and at such times, besides spending all he had, he became turbulent and quarrelsome. Vasili Andreyitch had dismissed him several times, and afterward engaged him again; valuing his honesty and kindness to animals, but chiefly his cheapness. The merchant did not pay Nikita eighty rubles, the worth of such a man, but forty; and even that he paid without regular account, in small instalments, and mostly not in cash, but in high-priced goods from his own shop.

Nikita's wife, Marfa, a vigorous and once beautiful woman, carried on the home, with a boy almost fully grown and two girls. She never urged Nikita to live at home: first, because she had lived for about twenty years with a cooper, a muzhik from another village, who lodged with them; and secondly, because, although she treated her husband as she pleased when he was sober, she feared him like fire when he was drinking.

Once, when drunk at home, Nikita, apparently to

[1] *Nye khozyaïn.*

revenge himself for all the submissiveness he had shown his wife when sober, broke open her box, took her best clothes, and, seizing an ax, cut to shreds all her sarafans and garments. All the wages Nikita earned went to his wife, and he made no objection to this arrangement. Thus it was that Marfa, two days before the holiday, came to Vasili Andreyitch, and got from him wheat flour, tea, sugar, and a pint of vodka, — about three rubles' worth in all, — and five rubles in cash; and she thanked him as for a special favor, although, at the lowest figure, Vasili Andreyitch owed twenty rubles.

"What agreement did I make with you?" said Vasili Andreyitch to Nikita. "If you want anything, take it; you will work it out. I am not like other folks, with their delays, and accounts, and fines. We are dealing straightforwardly. You work for me, and I'll stand by you."

Talking in this way, Vasili Andreyitch was honestly convinced of his beneficence to Nikita; and he was so plausible that all those who depended on him for their money, beginning with Nikita, confirmed him in this conviction that he was not only not cheating them, but was doing them a service.

"I understand, Vasili Andreyitch; I do my best, I try to do as I would for my own father. I understand all right," answered Nikita, though he understood very well that Vasili Andreyitch was cheating him; at the same time he felt that it was useless to try to get the accounts cleared up. While there was nowhere else to go, he must stay where he was, and take what he could get.

Now, on receiving his master's orders to put the horse in, Nikita, willingly and cheerfully as always, and with a firm and easy stride, stepped to the cart-shed, took down from the nail the heavy, tasseled leather bridle, and, jingling the rings of the bit, went to the closed stable where by himself stood the horse which Vasili Andreyitch had ordered harnessed.

"Well, silly,[1] were you lonely, lonely?" said Nikita,

[1] *Durachok*, diminutive of *dura*, a fool.

in answer to the soft, welcoming whinny which greeted him from the stallion, a fairly good dark bay of medium height, with sloping quarters, who stood solitary in his stall. "No, no! Quiet, quiet, there's plenty of time! Let me give you a drink first," he went on, addressing the horse as if he were speaking to a creature which could understand human speech. With the skirt of his coat he swept down the horse's broad, double-ridged back, rough and dusty as it was; then he put the bridle on the handsome young head, arranged his ears and mane, and, throwing off the rope, led him away to drink.

Picking his way out of the dung-cumbered stall, Mukhortui began to plunge, making play with his hind foot, pretending that he wanted to kick Nikita, who was hurrying him to the well.

"Now, then, behave yourself, you rogue," said Nikita, knowing how careful Mukhortui was that the hind foot should only just touch his greasy sheepskin coat, but do no hurt; and Nikita himself especially enjoyed this sport.

After drinking the cold water, the horse drew a deep sigh, and moved his wet, strong lips, from which transparent drops fell into the trough; then, after standing a moment as if in thought, he suddenly gave a loud neigh.

"If you want no more, you need n't take it. Well, let it be at that; but don't ask again for more," said Nikita, with perfect seriousness, emphasizing to Mukhortui the consequences of his behavior. Then he briskly ran back to the shed, pulling the rein on the gay young horse, who lashed out all the way along the yard.

No other men were about, except a stranger to the place, the husband of the cook, who had come for the holiday.

"Go and ask, there's a good fellow, which sledge is wanted, the wide one or the little one," said Nikita to him.

The cook's husband went into the high-perched, iron-roofed house, and soon returned with the answer that the small one was ordered. By this time Nikita had

put on the brass-studded saddle, and, carrying in one hand the light, painted yoke, with the other hand he led the horse toward the two sledges which stood under the shed.

"All right, the small one it is," said he, backing into the shafts the intelligent horse, which all the time pretended to bite at him; and, with the help of the cook's husband, he began to harness.

When all was nearly ready, and only the reins needed attention, Nikita sent the cook's husband to the shed for straw and to the storehouse for some sacking.

"That's capital! There, there; don't bristle up so!" said Nikita, squeezing into the sledge the freshly thrashed oat straw which the cook's husband had brought. "Now give me the sacking, while we spread it out, and put the cloth over it. That's all right, just the thing, comfortable to sit on," said he, doing that which he was talking about, and making the cloth tight over the straw all round.

"Thanks, my dear fellow," said Nikita to the cook's husband. "When two work, it's done quicker."

Then, disentangling the leather reins, the ends of which were brought together and tied on a ring, he took the driver's seat on the sledge, and shook up the good horse, who stirred himself, eager to make across the frozen refuse that littered the yard, toward the gate.

"Uncle Mikit, eh, uncle!"[1] came a shout behind him, from a seven-year-old boy in a black fur cloak, new white felt boots, and warm cap, who came hurrying out from the entrance-hall toward the yard. "Put me in?" he asked in a shrill voice, buttoning his little coat as he ran.

"All right, come, my dove," said Nikita; and, stopping the sledge, he put in the master's son, whose face grew radiant with joy, and drove out into the road.

It was three o'clock, and cold — about ten degrees of frost — gloomy and windy. Half the sky was shrouded by a low-hanging dark cloud. In the yard it seemed quiet, but in the street the wind was more noticeable.

[1] *Dyadya Mikit, dyadyushka; dyadyushka* is diminutive of *dyadya.*

The snow blew down from the roof of the barn close by, and at the corner by the baths flew whirling round. Nikita had scarcely driven out and turned round by the front door, when Vasili Andreyitch, too, with a cigarette in his mouth, wearing a sheepskin overcoat tightly fastened by a girdle placed low, came out from the entrance-hall. He strode down the trampled snow of the high steps, which creaked under his leather-trimmed felt boots, and stopped. Drawing in one final puff of smoke, he flung down his cigarette and trampled it underfoot; then, breathing out the smoke through his mustaches and critically surveying the horse, he began to turn in the corners of his overcoat collar on both sides of his ruddy face, clean-shaven, except for a mustache, so as to keep the fur clear from the moisture of his breath.

"See there! What a funny little rascal! He's all ready!" said he, as he caught sight of his little pale, thin son in the sledge. Vasili Andreyitch was excited by the wine he had taken with his guests, and was therefore more than usually satisfied with everything which belonged to him, and with everything he did. The sight of his son, whom he always in his own mind thought of as his heir, now caused him great satisfaction. He looked at him, and as he did so he smirked and showed his long teeth.

His wife, a pale and meager woman, about to become a mother, stood behind him in the entrance-hall with a woolen shawl so wrapped about her head and shoulders that only her eyes could be seen.

"Would it not be better to take Nikita with you?" she asked, timidly stepping out from the door.

Vasili Andreyitch made no reply, but merely spat, scowling angrily at her words, which evidently were disagreeable to him.

"You have money with you," the wife continued, in the same plaintive voice. "What if the weather should get worse! Be careful, for God's sake."

"Do you think I don't know the road, that I need a guide?" retorted Vasili Andreyitch, with that affected compression of the lips with which he ordinarily

addressed dealers in the market, and bringing out every syllable with extraordinary precision, as if he valued his own speech.

"Really, I would take him. I beg of you, for God's sake!" repeated his wife, folding her shawl closer.

"Just listen! She sticks to it like a leaf in the bath!.... Why, where must I take him to?"

"Well, Vasili Andreyitch, I'm ready," said Nikita, cheerfully. "If I'm away, there are only the horses to be fed," he added, turning to his mistress.

"I'll look after that, Nikitushka; I'll tell Semyon," answered the mistress.

"Well, then, shall I come, Vasili Andreyitch?" asked Nikita, waiting.

"It seems we must have some regard for the old woman. But if you come, go and put on something warmer," said Vasili Andreyitch, smiling once more, and winking at Nikita's sheepskin coat, which was torn under the arms and down the back, and soiled and patched and frayed into fringes round the skirts.

"Hey, dear soul, come and hold the horse awhile!" shouted Nikita to the cook's husband, in the yard.

"I'll hold him myself," said the little boy, taking his half-frozen red hands out of his pockets, and seizing the cold leather reins.

"Only don't be too long putting your best coat[1] on! Be quick!" shouted Vasili Andreyitch, grinning at Nikita.

"In a breath, batyushka, Vasili Andreyitch!" said Nikita, and, with his trousers stuffed into his old patched felt boots, he swiftly ran down the yard to the laborers' quarters.

"Here, Arinushka,[2] give me my khalat off the oven. I have to go with the master!" said Nikita, hastening into the room, and taking his girdle down from the nail.

The cook, who had just finished her after-dinner nap, and was about to get ready the samovar for her husband, turned cheerily to Nikita, and, catching his haste, moved

[1] He calls it a *diplomat.*
[2] Diminutive of Arina, popular form of Irina, Irene.

about quickly, just as he was doing, took the well-worn woolen khalat off the oven, where it was drying, and shook and rubbed it.

"There now, you 'll have a chance to spread and have a good time with your husband here," said Nikita to the cook; always, as part of his good-natured politeness, ready to say something to any one whom he came across.

Then, putting round himself the narrow shrunken girdle, he drew in his breath and tightened it about his spare body as much as he could.

"There," he said afterward, addressing himself, not to the cook, but to the girdle, while tucking the ends under his belt, "this way, you won't jump out." Then, working his shoulders up and down to get his arms loose, he put on the khalat, again stretching his back to free his arms, and poked up under his sleeves and took his mittens from the shelf.

"Now, we 're all right."

"You ought to change your boots," said the cook; "those boots are very bad."

Nikita stopped, as if remembering something.

"Yes, I ought..... But it will go as it is; it 's not far."

And he ran out into the yard.

"Won't you be cold, Nikitushka?" said his mistress, as he came up to the sledge.

"Why should I be cold? It is quite warm," answered Nikita, arranging the straw in the fore part of the sledge, so as to bring it over his legs, and stowing under it the whip which the good horse would not need.

Vasili Andreyitch had already taken his place in the sledge, almost filling up the whole of the curved back with the bulk of his body wrapped in two shubas; and, taking up the reins, he started at once. Nikita jumped in, seating himself in front, to the left, and hanging one leg over the side.

CHAPTER II

The good stallion took the sledge along at a brisk pace, over the smooth frozen road through the village; the runners creaking faintly as they went.

"Look at him there, hanging on! Give me the whip, Mikita," shouted Vasili Andreyitch, evidently enjoying the sight of his boy holding to the sledge-runners, behind. "I'll give it to you! Run to your mamma, you young dog!"

The boy jumped off. Mukhortui began to pace and then, getting his breath, broke into a trot.

Krestui, the village where Vasili Andreyitch lived, consisted of six houses. Scarcely had they passed the blacksmith's izba, the last in the village, when they suddenly remarked that the wind was much stronger than they had thought. The road was by this time scarcely visible. The tracks of the sledge were instantly covered with snow, and the road was to be distinguished only by the fact that it was higher than anything else. There was a whirl of snow over the fields, and the line where the earth and sky join could not be distinguished. The Telyatin forest, always plainly in sight, loomed dimly through the driving snow-dust. The wind came from the left hand, persistently blowing to one side the mane on Mukhortui's powerful neck, turning away even his knotted tail, and pressing Nikita's high collar — he sat on the windward side — against his face and nose.

"There is no chance of showing his speed, with this snow," said Vasili Andreyitch, proud of his good horse. "I once went to Pashutino with him, and we got there in half an hour."

"What?" said Nikita, who could not hear on account of his collar.

"Pashutino, I said; and he did it in half an hour," shouted Vasili Andreyitch.

"A good horse that, no question," said Nikita.

They became silent. But Vasili Andreyitch wanted to talk.

"Say, I suppose you tell your wife[1] not to give any drink to the cooper?" said Vasili Andreyitch in the same loud voice, being perfectly convinced that Nikita must feel flattered, talking with such an important and sensible man as himself, and he was so pleased with his jest that it never entered his head that the subject might be unpleasant to Nikita.

Again the man failed to catch his master's words, the voice being carried away by the wind.

Vasili Andreyitch, in his loud clear voice, repeated the jest about the cooper.

"God help them, Vasili Andreyitch, I don't meddle in these matters. I only hope that she does no harm to the lad; if she does — then God help her!"

"That is right," said Vasili Andreyitch. "Well, are you going to buy a horse in the spring?" Thus he began a new topic of conversation.

"Yes, I must buy one," answered Nikita, turning aside the collar of his kaftan, and leaning toward his master. Now the conversation became interesting to him, and he did not wish to lose a word.

"My lad is grown up, he must plow for himself, but now he is hired out all the time," said he.

"Well, then, take the horse with the thin loins; the price will not be high," shouted Vasili Andreyitch, feeling himself excited and consequently eagerly entering into his favorite business of horse-dealing, to which he gave all his intellectual powers.

"You give me fifteen rubles, and I 'll buy in the market," said Nikita, who knew that at the highest price the horse which Vasili Andreyitch called "Bezkostretchnui" and wanted to sell him, was not worth more than seven rubles, but would cost him at his master's hands twenty-five; and that meant half a year's wages gone.

"The horse is a good one. I treat you as I would myself. Conscientiously. Brekhunof injures no man. Let me stand the loss, and me only. Honestly," he shouted in the voice which he used in cheating[2] his customers, "a genuine horse."

[1] *Khozyaïka.* [2] *Zagovarivat' zubui*, "talk the teeth out."

"As you think," said Nikita, sighing, and convinced that it was useless to listen further; and he again drew the collar over his ear and face.

They drove in silence for about half an hour. The wind cut sharply into Nikita's side and arm, where his shuba was torn. He huddled himself up and breathed into his coat-collar, which covered his mouth; and so he was not wholly cold!

"What do you think; shall we go through Karamuishevo, or keep the straight road?" said Vasili Andreyitch.

The road through Karamuishevo was more frequented, and staked on both sides; but it was longer. The straight road was nearer, but it was little used, and either there were no stakes, or they were poor ones left standing covered with snow.

Nikita thought awhile.

"Through Karamuishevo is farther, but it is better going," he said.

"But straight on, we have only to be careful not to lose the road in passing the little valley, and then the way is fairly good, sheltered by the forest," said Vasili Andreyitch, who favored the direct road.

"As you wish," replied Nikita, and again he rolled up his collar.

So Vasili Andreyitch took this way, and after driving about half a verst, he came to a place where there was a long oak branch which shook in the wind, and to which a few dry leaves were clinging, and there he turned to the left.

On turning, the wind blew almost directly against them, and the snow showered from on high. Vasili Andreyitch stirred up his horse, and inflated his cheeks, blowing his breath upon his mustaches. Nikita dozed.

They drove thus silently for about ten minutes. Suddenly Vasili Andreyitch began to say something.

"What?" asked Nikita, opening his eyes.

Vasili Andreyitch did not answer, but bent himself about, looking behind them, and then ahead of the horse. The sweat had curled the animal's coat on the groin and neck, and he was going at a walk.

"I say, what's the matter?" repeated Nikita.

"What is the matter?" mocked Vasili Andreyitch, irritated. "I see no stakes. We must be off the road."

"Well, pull up then, and I will find the road," said Nikita, and lightly jumping down, he drew out the whip from the straw and started off to the left, from his own side of the sledge.

The snow was not deep that season, so that one could travel anywhere, but in places it was up to one's knee, and got into Nikita's boots. He walked about, feeling with his feet and the whip, but no road was to be found.

"Well?" said Vasili Andreyitch, when Nikita returned to the sledge.

"There is no road on this side. I must try the other."

"There's something dark there in front. Go and see what it is," said Vasili Andreyitch.

Nikita walked ahead; got near the dark patch; and found it was black earth which the wind had strewn over the snow, from some fields of winter wheat. After searching to the right also, he returned to the sledge, shook the snow off himself, cleared his boots, and took his seat.

"We must go to the right," he said decidedly. "The wind was on our left before, now it is straight in my face. To the right," he repeated, with the same decision.

Vasili Andreyitch heeded him and turned to the right. But yet no road was found. He drove on in this direction for some time. The wind did not diminish, and the snow still fell.

"We seem to be astray altogether, Vasili Andreyitch," suddenly exclaimed Nikita, as if he were announcing some pleasant news. "What is that?" he said, pointing to some black potato-leaves, which thrust themselves through the snow.

Vasili Andreyitch stopped the horse, which by this time was in a heavy perspiration and stood with its deep sides heaving.

"What can it mean?" asked he.

"It means that we are on the Zakharovsky lands. Why, we are ever so far astray!"

"You lie!" remarked Vasili Andreyitch.

"I am not lying, Vasili Andreyitch; it is the truth," said Nikita. "You can feel that the sledge is moving over a potato-field, and there are the heaps of old leaves. It is the Zakharovsky factory-land."

"What a long way we are out!" said Vasili Andreyitch. "What are we to do?"

"Go straight ahead, that's all. We shall reach some place," said Nikita. "If we do not get to Zakharovka, we shall come out at the owner's farm."

Vasili Andreyitch assented, and let the horse go as Nikita had said. They drove in this way for a long while. At times they passed over winter wheat fields all bare, and the sledge creaked over the humps of frozen soil. Sometimes they passed a stubble-field, sometimes a corn-field, where they could see the upstanding wormwood and straw beaten by the wind; sometimes they drove into deep and even white snow on all sides, with nothing visible above it.

The snow whirled down from on high, and sometimes seemed to rise up from below. The horse was evidently tiring; his coat grew crisp and white with frozen sweat, and he walked. Suddenly he stumbled in some ditch or water-course, and went down. Vasili Andreyitch wanted to halt, but Nikita cried to him:—

"Why should we stop? We have gone astray, and we must find our road. Hey, old fellow, hey," he shouted in an encouraging voice to the horse; and he jumped from the sledge, sinking into the ditch.

The horse dashed forward, and quickly landed upon a frozen heap. Obviously it was a made ditch.

"Where are we, then?" said Vasili Andreyitch.

"We shall see," answered Nikita. "Go ahead, we shall get to somewhere."

"Is not that the Goryatchkin forest?" asked Vasili Andreyitch, pointing out a dark mass which showed across the snow in front of them.

"When we get nearer, we shall see what forest it is," said Nikita.

He noticed that from the side of the dark mass, long, dry willow leaves were fluttering toward them; and so he knew that it was no forest, but a settlement; yet he chose not to say so. And, in fact, they had scarcely gone twenty-five yards beyond the ditch, when they distinctly made out the trees, and heard a new and melancholy sound. Nikita was right; it was not a forest but a row of tall willow trees, whereon a few scattered leaves still shivered. The willows were evidently ranged along the ditch of a threshing-floor. Coming up to the trees, through which the wind moaned and sighed, the horse suddenly planted his forefeet above the height of the sledge, then drew up his hind legs after him, turned to the left and leaped, sinking up to his knees in the snow. It was a road.

"Here we are," said Nikita, "but I don't know where."

The horse without erring ran along the snow-covered road, and they had not gone eighty yards when they saw the straight strip of a wattled fence, from which the snow was flying in the wind. Passing under a deeply drifted roof of a granary, the road turned in the direction of the wind, and brought them upon a snowdrift. But ahead of them was a passage between two houses; the drift was merely blown across the road, and had to be crossed. Indeed, after passing the drift, they came into a village street. In front of the end house of the village, the wind was shaking desperately the frozen linen which hung there: shirts, one red, one white, some leg-cloths, and a skirt. The white shirt especially shook frantically, tugging at the sleeves.

"Look there, either a lazy woman or a dead one left her linen out over the holiday," said Nikita, seeing the fluttering shirts.

CHAPTER III

At the beginning of the street, the wind was still fierce, and the road was snow-covered; but well within the village, it was calm, warm, and cheerful. At one house a dog was barking; at another, a woman, with a sleeveless coat over her head, came running out from somewhere, and stopped at the door of an izba to see who was driving past. In the middle of the village could be heard the sound of girls singing.

Here, in the village, the wind and the snow and the frost seemed subdued.

"Why, this is Grishkino," said Vasili Andreyitch.

"It is," said Nikita.

Grishkino it was. So they had strayed eight versts too far to the left, and traveled out of their proper direction; still, they had got somewhat nearer to their destination. From Grishkino to Goryatchkino was about five versts more.

In the middle of the village they almost ran into a tall man, walking in the center of the road.

"Who is driving?" said this man, and he held the horse. Then, recognizing Vasili Andreyitch, he took hold of the shaft, and reached the sledge, where he sat himself on the driver's seat.

It was the muzhik Isaï, well known to Vasili Andreyitch, and known throughout the district as the most notorious horse-thief.

"Ah, Vasili Andreyitch, where is God sending you?" said Isaï, from whom Nikita caught the smell of vodka.

"We are going to Goryatchkino."

"You 've come a long way round! You should have gone through Malakhovo."

"'Should have' is good, but we got astray," said Vasili Andreyitch, pulling up.

"A good horse," said Isaï, examining him, and dexterously tightening the loosened knot in his thick tail. "Are you going to stay the night here?"

"No, friend, we must go on."

"Your business must be pressing. And who is that? Ah, Nikita Stepanuich!"

"Who else?" answered Nikita. "Look here, good friend, can you tell us how not to miss the road again?"

"How can you possibly miss it? Just turn back straight along the street, and then outside the houses; keep straight ahead. Don't go to the left. When you reach the highroad, then turn to the right."

"And which turning do we take out of the highroad — the summer or the winter road?" asked Nikita.

"The winter road. As soon as you get clear of the village there are some bushes, and opposite them is a way-mark, an oaken one, all branches. There is the road."

Vasili Andreyitch turned the horse back, and drove through the village.

"You had better stay the night," Isaï shouted after them. But Vasili Andreyitch did not answer, and started up the horse; five versts of smooth road, two versts of it through the forest, was easy enough to drive over, especially as the wind seemed quieter and the snow had apparently ceased falling.

After once more passing along the street, darkened and trodden with fresh horse-tracks, and after passing the house where the linen was hung out, — the white shirt was by this time torn, and hung by one frozen sleeve, — they came to the weirdly moaning and sighing willows, and then were again in the open country.

Not only had the snow-storm not ceased, but it seemed to have gained strength. The whole road was under snow, and only the stakes proved that they were keeping right. But even these signs of the road were difficult to make out, for the wind blew straight into their faces.

Vasili Andreyitch screwed up his eyes, and bent his head, examining the way-marks; but for the most part, he left the horse alone, trusting to his sagacity. And, in fact, the creature went truly, turning now to the left, now to the right, along the windings of the road which he sensed under his feet. So that in spite of the thickening snow

and strengthening wind, the way-marks were still to be seen, now on the left, now on the right.

They had driven thus for ten minutes, when suddenly, straight in front of their horse, appeared a black object moving through the obliquely flying whirlwind of snow. It was a party of travelers. Mukhortui had overtaken them, and he struck his forefeet against the cross-bar of their sledge.

"Drive round! .... a-a-ĭ! .... Go ahead!" cried voices from the sledge.

Vasili Andreyitch started to go round them. In the sledge were four peasants, three men and a woman, evidently returning from a festival visit. One of the men was whipping the snow-plastered rump of their little horse with a switch, while two of them, waving their arms from the fore part of the sledge, shouted out something. The woman, muffled up and covered with snow, sat quiet and rigid at the back.

"Where are you from?" asked Vasili Andreyitch.

"A-a-a-skiye!" was all that could be heard.

"I say, where are you from?"

"A-a-a-skiye!" shouted one of the peasants, with all his strength; but nevertheless it was impossible to make out the name.

"Go on! don't give up!" cried another, the one who kept beating his poor little horse.

"So you have come from the festival, have you?"

"Get on! get on! Up, Semka! drive round! Up,up!"

The sledges struck together, almost locked their sides, then fell apart, and the peasants' sledge began to drop behind.

The shaggy, snow-covered, big-bellied pony, laboriously breathing under the duga-bow, and evidently at the end of his strength in his vain efforts to escape from the switch belaboring him, staggered along on his short legs through the deep snow, which he trod down with difficulty. With distended nostrils, and ears set back in distress, and with his lower lip stuck out like a fish's, he kept his muzzle near Nikita's shoulder for a moment; then he began to fall behind.

"See what drink does," said Nikita. "They have tired that horse to death. What heathens!"[1]

For a few minutes, the pantings of the tired-out horse could be heard, with the drunken shouts of the peasants. Then the pantings became inaudible, and the shouts, also. Again nothing could be heard round about except the wind whistling in their ears, and the occasional scrape of the sledge-runners on a bare spot of road.

This encounter enlivened and encouraged Vasili Andreyitch, and he drove more boldly, not examining the way-marks, and again trusting to his horse.

Nikita had nothing to occupy him, and dozed just as he always did in such circumstances, thus wasting much good daylight. Suddenly the horse stopped, and Nikita was jerked forward, knocking his nose against the front.

"It seems we are going wrong again," said Vasili Andreyitch.

"What is the matter?"

"The way-marks are not to be seen. We must be out of the road."

"Well, if we 've lost the road, we must look for it," said Nikita, laconically; and again stepping easily in his great bark overshoes, he started out to explore the snow.

He walked for a long time, now out of sight, now reappearing, then disappearing; at last, he returned.

"There is no road here; it may be farther on," said he, sitting down in the sledge.

It was already beginning to grow dark. The storm was neither increasing, nor did it diminish.

"I should like to hear those peasants again," said Vasili Andreyitch.

"Yes, but they won't pass near us; we must be a good distance off the road. Maybe they are astray, too," said Nikita.

"Where shall we make for, then?"

"Leave the horse to himself. He will find his way. Give me the reins."

[1] *Aziatui kak yest'*, like Asiatics.

Vasili Andreyitch handed over the reins; the more willingly because his hands, in spite of his warm gloves, were beginning to freeze.

Nikita took the reins, and held them lightly, trying to give no pressure; he was glad to prove the good sense of his favorite. And in fact, the intelligent horse, turning one ear and then the other, first in this and then in that direction, presently began to wheel round.

"He just does n't speak," said Nikita. "Look how he manages it! Go on, go on, that's good."

The wind was now at their backs; they felt warmer.

"Is he not wise?" continued Nikita, delighted with his horse. "A Kirghiz beast is strong, but stupid. But this one, — see what he does with his ears. There is no need of a telegraph-wire; he can feel through a mile."

Hardly half an hour had gone, when a forest, or a village, or something, loomed up in front; and, to their right, the way-marks again showed. Evidently they were on the road again.

"We are back at Grishkino, are we not?" exclaimed Nikita, suddenly.

Indeed, on the left hand rose the same granary, with the snow flying from it; and farther on was the same line with the frozen washing — the shirts and drawers, so fiercely shaken by the wind.

Again they drove through the street, again felt the quiet, warmth, and cheerfulness, again saw the road with the horse-tracks; heard voices, songs, the barking of a dog. It was now so dark that a few windows were lighted.

Halfway down the street, Vasili Andreyitch turned the horse toward a large two-storied brick house, and drew up at the steps.

Nikita went to the snow-dimmed window, in the light from which glittered the flitting flakes, and knocked with the handle of the whip.

"Who is there?" a voice answered to his knock.

"The Brekhunofs, from Krestui, my good man," answered Nikita. "Come out for a minute."

Some one moved from the window, and in about two

minutes the door in the entrance-hall was heard to open, the latch of the front door clicked, and holding the door against the wind, there peeped out a tall, old, white-bearded muzhik, who had thrown a sheepskin coat over his white holiday shirt. Behind him was a young fellow in a red shirt and leather boots.

"What, is it you, Andreyitch?" said the old man.

"We have lost our road, friend," said Vasili Andreyitch. "We set out for Goryatchkino, and found ourselves here. Then we went on, but lost the road again."

"Why, how you 've wandered!" answered the old man. "Petrushka, go, open the gates," he said to the young man in the red shirt.

"Of course I will," said the young fellow, cheerfully, as he ran off through the entrance-hall.

"We are not stopping for the night, friend," said Vasili Andreyitch.

"Where can you go in the night-time? You had better stop."

"Should be very glad to spend the night, but I must go on business, friend; it 's impossible!"

"Well, then, at least warm yourself a little; the samovar is just ready," said the old man.

"Warm ourselves? We can do that," said Vasili Andreyitch. "It cannot get darker, and when the moon is up, it will be still lighter. Come, Mikit, let us go in and warm up a bit."

"Why, yes, let us warm ourselves," said Nikita, who was very cold, and whose great desire was to thaw out his benumbed limbs in a well-heated room.

Vasili Andreyitch went with the old man into the house. Nikita drove through the gates opened by Petrushka, by whose advice he stood the horse under the pent-roof of the shed, the floor of which was strewn with stable-litter. The high duga-bow caught the roof-beam, and the hens and a cock, already gone to roost up there, began to cackle angrily and scratch on the wood. Some startled sheep, pattering their feet on the frozen dung-heap, huddled themselves out of the way. A dog yelped

desperately in fright, after the manner of young hounds, and barked fiercely at the stranger.

Nikita held conversation with them all. He begged pardon of the fowls, and calmed them with assurances that he would give them no more trouble; he reproved the sheep for being needlessly frightened; and while fastening up the horse, he kept on exhorting the little dog.

"That will do," said he, shaking the snow from himself. "Hear, how he is barking!" added he, for the dog's benefit. "That's quite enough for you, quite enough, stupid! That will do! Why do you bother yourself? There are no thieves or strangers about."

"It is like the tale of the Three Domestic Counselors," said the young man, thrusting the sledge under the shed with his strong arms.

"What about the counselors?"

"The tale is in P'ulson. A thief sneaks up to a house; the dog barks,—that means 'Be on your guard;' the cock crows,—that means 'Get up;' the cat washes itself,—that means 'A welcome guest is coming, be ready for him,'" said the young man, with a smile.

Petrukha could read and write, and knew, almost by heart, the only book he possessed, which was Paulson's primer; and he liked, especially when, as now, he had been drinking a little too much, to quote from the book some saying which seemed appropriate to the occasion.

"Quite true," said Nikita.

"I suppose you are cold, uncle," said Petrukha.

"Yes, something that way," said Nikita. They both crossed the yard and entered the house.

CHAPTER IV

The house at which Vasili Andreyitch had drawn up was one of the richest in the village. The family had five allotments of land, and hired still more outside. Their establishment owned six horses, three cows, two yearling heifers, and twenty head of sheep. In the

house lived twenty-two souls; four married sons, six grandchildren (of whom one, Petrukha, was married), two great-grandchildren, three orphans, and four daughters-in-law with their children. It was one of the few families, living together in one household; yet even here was that indefinable interior work of disintegration, — beginning, as usual, among the women, — infallibly bound to bring about speedy separation. Two sons were water-carriers in Moscow; one was in the army. At present, those at home were the old man, his wife, the second son who was manager[1] of the house, the oldest son who had come from Moscow on a holiday, and all the women and children. Besides the family there was a guest, a neighbor, who was an intimate friend.

Over the table in the living-room hung a shaded lamp, which threw a bright light down on the tea-service, a bottle of vodka, and some eatables, and on the brick walls, where, in the "red corner," hung the ikons with pictures on each side of them.

At the head of the table sat Vasili Andreyitch, in his black fur coat, sucking his frozen mustaches, and scrutinizing the people and the room with his bulging, hawk-like eyes. Beside him at the table sat the white-bearded, bald, old father of the house, in a white homespun shirt; next him sat the son from Moscow, with his sturdy back and shoulders, clad in a thin cotton shirt; then the other son, the broad-shouldered eldest brother, who acted as head of the house; then a lean and red-haired muzhik — the visiting neighbor.

The muzhiks, having drunk and eaten, prepared to take tea, and the samovar was already boiling as it stood on the floor near the oven. The children were to be seen on the oven and on sleeping-shelves. On the wall bench sat a woman with a cradle beside her. The aged mother of the house, whose face was covered with a network of fine wrinkles even to the lips, waited on Vasili Andreyitch.

As Nikita entered the room, she was just filling a

[1] *Khozyaïn.*

coarse glass with vodka, and handing it to Vasili Andreyitch.

"No harm done, Vasili Andreyitch, but you must wish our good health," said she. "Have a drink, dear!"

The sight and smell of vodka, especially in his cold and tired condition, greatly disturbed Nikita's mind. He frowned, and after shaking the snow from his kaftan and hat, stood before the holy images: without apparently seeing any one, he made the sign of the cross thrice, and bowed to the images; then, turning to the old man, he bowed to him first, afterward to all who sat at table, and again to the women beside the oven; and saying, "Good fortune to your feast," he began to take off his overcoat without looking at the table.

"Why, you are all over frost, uncle," said the eldest brother, looking at the snow which crowned Nikita's face, eyes, and beard.

Nikita took off his kaftan, shook it again, hung it near the oven, and came to the table. They offered him vodka also. There was a moment's bitter struggle; he came very near taking the glass and pouring the fragrant, transparent liquid into his mouth, but he looked at Vasili Andreyitch, remembered his vow, remembered the lost boots, the cooper, his son for whom he had promised to buy a horse when the spring came; he sighed, and refused.

"I don't drink, thank you humbly," he said gloomily, and sat down on the bench, near the second window.

"Why not?" asked the eldest brother.

"I don't drink, that's all," said Nikita, not daring to raise his eyes, and looking at his thin beard and mustache, and at the thawing icicles clinging to them.

"It is not good for him," said Vasili Andreyitch, munching a biscuit after emptying his glass.

"Then have some tea," said the kindly old woman. "I dare say you are quite benumbed, good soul. How lazy you women are with the samovar!"

"It is ready," answered the youngest, and wiping round the samovar with an apron, she bore it heavily to the table, and set it down with a thud.

Meanwhile, Vasili Andreyitch told how they had gone astray and worked back twice to the same village; what mistakes they had made, and how they had met the drunken peasants. Their hosts expressed surprise, showed why and where they had missed the road, told them the names of the revelers they had met, and made plain how they ought to go.

"From here to Molchanovka, a child might go; the only thing is to make sure where to turn out of the high-road; you'll see a bush there. But yet you did not get there," said the neighbor.

"You ought to stop here. The women will make up a bed," said the old woman, persuasively.

"You would make a better start in the morning; much pleasanter, that," said the old man, affirming what his wife had said.

"Impossible, friend! Business!" said Vasili Andreyitch. "If you let an hour go, you may not be able to make it up in a year," added he, remembering the forest and the dealers who might do him out of his purchase. "We shall get there, shan't we?" he said, turning to Nikita.

"We may lose ourselves again," said Nikita, gloomily. He was gloomy, because of the intense longing he felt for the vodka; and the tea, the only thing which could quench that longing, had not yet been offered to him.

"We have only to reach the turning, and there is no more danger of losing the road, as it goes straight through the forest," said Vasili Andreyitch.

"Just as you say, Vasili Andreyitch; if you want to go, let us go," said Nikita, taking the glass of tea offered to him.

"Well, let us drink up our tea, and then forward march!"

Nikita said nothing, but shook his head; and carefully pouring the tea into the saucer, began to warm his hands and his swollen fingers over the steam. Then, taking a small bite of sugar in his mouth, he turned to their hosts, said, "Your health," and drank down the warming liquid.

"Could n't some one come with us to the turning?" asked Vasili Andreyitch.

"Why not? Certainly," said the eldest son. "Petrukha will put in the horse, and go with you as far as the turning."

"Then put in your horse, and I shall be in your debt."

"My dear man," said the kindly old woman, "we are right glad to do it."

"Petrukha, go and put in the mare," said the eldest son.

"All right," said Petrukha, smiling; and, without delay, taking his cap from the nail, he hurried away to harness up.

While the harnessing was in progress, the talk turned back to the point where it stood when Vasili Andreyitch arrived. The old man had complained to his neighbor, the village-elder, about the conduct of his third son, who had sent him no present this holiday-time, though he had sent a French shawl to his wife.

"These young folk are getting worse and worse," said the old man.

"Very much worse!" said the neighbor. "They are unmanageable. They know too much. There 's Demotchkin, now, who broke his father's arm. It all comes from too much learning."

Nikita listened, watched the faces, and it was evident that he, too, would like to have a share in the conversation, had he not been so busy with his tea; as it was, he only nodded his head approvingly. He emptied glass after glass, growing warmer and warmer, and more and more comfortable. The talk continued in one strain, all about the harm that comes from family division; and it was clearly no theoretical discussion, but concerned with a rupture in this very house, arising through the second son, who sat there in his place, morosely silent. The question was a painful one, and absorbed the whole family; but out of politeness they refrained from discussing their private affairs before strangers.

At last, however, the old man could endure it no longer. In a tearful voice, he began to say that there should be no break-up of the family while he lived; that the house had much to thank God for, but if they fell apart — they must become beggars.

"Just like the Matveyefs," said the neighbor. "There was plenty among them all, but when they broke up the family, there was nothing for any of them."

"That's just what you want to do," said the old man to his son.

The son answered nothing, and there was a painful pause. The silence was broken by Petrukha, who had by this time harnessed the horse and returned to the room, where he had been standing for a few minutes, smiling all the time.

"There is a tale in P'ulson, just like this," said he. "A father gave his sons a broom to break. They could not break it while it was bound together, but they broke it easily by taking every switch by itself. That's the way here," he said, with his broad smile. "All's ready!" he added.

"Well, if we're ready, let us start," said Vasili Andreyitch. "As to this quarrel, don't you give in, grandfather. You got everything together, and you are the master. Apply to the magistrate; he will show you how to keep your authority."

"And he gives himself such airs, such airs," continued the old man, in his complaining voice. "There is no ordering him! It is as if Satan lived in him."

Meanwhile, Nikita, having drunk his fifth glass of tea, did not stand it upside down, in sign that he had finished, but laid it on its side, hoping they might fill it a sixth time. But there was no longer any water in the samovar, and the hostess did not fill up for him again, and then Vasili Andreyitch began to put on his things. There was no help; Nikita also rose, put back into the sugar-basin the little lump of sugar, which he had nibbled on all sides, wiped the moisture from his face with the skirt of his coat, and went to put on his khalat.

After getting into the garment, he sighed heavily;

then, having thanked their hosts and said good-by, he went out from the warm, bright room, and through the dark, cold entrance-hall, where the wind creaked the doors and drove the snow in at the chinks, into the dark yard.

Petrukha, in his shuba, stood in the center of the yard with the horse, and smiling recited verses from Paulson:—

Storm-clouds veil the sky with darkness,
Swiftly whirl the snowblasts wild,
Now the storm roars like a wild beast,
Now it waileth like a child.[1]

Nikita nodded appreciatively, and arranged the reins.

The old man, coming out with Vasili Andreyitch, brought a lantern into the entry, and was going to show the way; but the wind put it out at once. Even in the inclosed yard, one could see that the storm had become much more violent.

"What weather!" thought Vasili Andreyitch. "I'm afraid we shall not get there. But it must be! Business! And then, I have put our friend to the trouble of harnessing his horse. God helping, we shall get there."

Their aged host also thought it better not to go; but he had offered his arguments already, and they had not listened to him. It was useless to ask them again.

"Maybe it is old age makes me overcautious; they will get there all right," thought he. "And we can all go to bed at proper time. It will be less bother."

As for Petrukha, he had no thought of danger: he knew the way so well and the whole region, and then besides, the lines about "the snowblasts wild" encouraged him, because they were a quite true description of what was going on out-of-doors. Nikita had no wish to go at all; but he was long used to follow other people's wishes, and to give up his own. Therefore no one withheld the travelers.

[1] This is rendered in rude fashion by Petrukha. The Russian poem given in Paulson is by Pushkin.

CHAPTER V

Vasili Andreyitch went over to his sledge, found it with some difficulty in the darkness, got in, and took the reins.

"Go ahead!" he shouted.

Petrukha, kneeling in his sledge, started the horse. Mukhortui, who had before been whinnying, aware of the mare's nearness, now dashed after her, and they drove out into the street. They rode once more through the village, down the same road, past the space where the frozen linen had hung, but was no longer to be seen; past the same barn, now snowed-up almost as high as the roof, from which the snow flew incessantly; past the moaning, whistling, and bending willows; and again they came to where the sea of snow raged from above and below. The wind was so violent that, taking the travelers sidewise when they were crossing its direction, it heeled the sledge over and pushed the horse aside. Petrukha drove his good mare in front, at an easy trot, giving her an occasional lively shout of encouragement. Mukhortui pressed after her.

After driving thus for about ten minutes, Petrukha turned around and called out something. But neither Vasili Andreyitch nor Nikita could hear for the wind, but they guessed that they had reached the turning. In fact, Petrukha had turned to the right; the wind which had been at their side again blew in their faces, and to the right, through the snow, loomed something black. It was the bush beside the turning.

"Well, good-by to you!"

"Thanks, Petrukha!"

"'The storm-clouds veil the sky with darkness!'" shouted Petrukha, and disappeared.

"Quite a poet," said Vasili Andreyitch, and shook the reins.

"Yes, a fine young man, a genuine muzhik," said Nikita.

They drove on.

Nikita, protecting his head by crouching it down between his shoulders, so that his short beard covered up his throat, sat silent, trying not to lose the warmth which the tea had given him. Before him, he saw the straight lines of the shafts, which to his eyes looked like the ruts of the road; he saw the shifting quarters of the horse, with the knotted tail blown off in one direction by the wind; beyond, he saw the high duga-bow between the shafts, and the horse's rocking head and neck, with the floating mane. From time to time he noticed the stakes, and knew that, thus far, they had kept to the road, and he need not concern himself.

Vasili Andreyitch drove on, trusting to the horse to keep to the road. But Mukhortui, although he had rested a little in the village, went unwillingly, and seemed to shirk from the road, so that Vasili Andreyitch had to press him at times.

"Here is a stake on the right, here's another, and there's a third," reckoned Vasili Andreyitch, "and here, in front, is the forest," he thought, examining a dark patch ahead. But that which he took for a forest was only a bush. They passed the bush, drove about fifty yards farther, and there was neither the fourth stake nor the forest.

"We must reach the forest soon," thought Vasili Andreyitch; and buoyed up by the vodka and the tea, he shook the reins. The good, obedient animal responded, and now at an amble, now at an easy trot, made in the direction he was sent, although he knew it was not the way in which he should have been going. Ten minutes went by, still no forest.

"I'm afraid we are astray again!" said Vasili Andreyitch, pulling up.

Nikita silently got out from the sledge, and holding with his hand the flaps of his khalat, which now pressed against him and then flew from him as he stood and turned in the wind, began to tread the snow; first he went to one side, then to the other. Three times he went out of sight altogether. At last he returned, and took the reins from Vasili Andreyitch's hands.

"We must go to the right," he said sternly and peremptorily; and he turned the horse.

"Well, if it must be to the right, let us go to the right," said Vasili Andreyitch, passing over the reins and thrusting his frozen hands into his sleeves.

Nikita did not answer.

"Now then, old fellow, stir yourself," he called to the horse; but Mukhortui, in spite of the shake of the reins, went on only slowly. In places the snow was knee-deep, and the sledge jerked at every movement of the horse.

Nikita took the whip, which hung in front of the sledge, and struck once. The good creature, unused to the knout, sprang forward at a trot, but soon fell again to a slow amble, and then began to walk. Thus they went for five minutes. All was so dark, and so blurred with snow from above and below, that sometimes they could not make out the duga-bow. At times it seemed as if the sledge was standing, and the ground running back. Suddenly the horse stopped short, evidently perceiving something a little distance in front of him. Nikita once more lightly jumped out, throwing down the reins, and went in front to find out what was the matter. But hardly had he taken a pace clear ahead, when his feet slipped, and he went rolling down some steep place.

"Tpru, tpru, tpru!" he said to himself, falling and trying to stop his fall. There was nothing to seize hold of, and he brought up only when his feet plunged into a deep bed of snow which lay in the ravine.

The fringe of drifted snow which hung on the edge of the ravine, disturbed by Nikita's fall, showered down on him, and got into his neck.

"What a way of doing!" cried Nikita, reproachfully addressing the snow and the ravine, as he cleared out his coat-collar.

"Mikit, ha, Mikit," shouted Vasili Andreyitch, from above.

But Nikita did not answer.

He was too much occupied in shaking away the snow,

then in looking for the whip, which he lost in rolling down the bank. Having found the whip, he started to climb up the bank where he had rolled down, but it was a perfect impossibility; he slipped back every time; so that he was compelled to go along the foot of the bank to find a way up. About ten yards from the place where he fell, he managed to struggle up again on all fours, and then he turned back along the bank toward the place where the horse should have been. He could not see horse or sledge; but by going with the wind, he heard Vasili Andreyitch's voice and Mukhortui's whinny calling him, before he saw them.

"I 'm coming; I 'm coming. What are you cackling for!" he said.

Only when he had approached quite near the sledge could he make out the horse and Vasili Andreyitch, who stood close by, and looked gigantic.

"Where the devil have you been hiding? We 've got to drive back. We must get back to Grishkino anyway," the master began to rebuke him angrily.

"I should be glad to get there, Vasili Andreyitch, but how are we to do it? Here is a ravine where if we once get in, we shall never come out. I pitched in there in such a way that I could hardly get out."

"Well, assuredly we can't stay here; somewhere we must go," said Vasili Andreyitch.

Nikita made no answer. He sat down on the sledge with his back to the wind, took off his boots and emptied them of snow; then, with a little straw which he took from the sledge, he stopped from the inside a gap in the left boot.

Vasili Andreyitch was silent, as if leaving everything to Nikita alone. Having got his boots on, Nikita drew his feet into the sledge, put on his mittens again, took the reins, and turned the horse along the ravine. But they had not driven a hundred paces when the horse stopped again. Another ravine confronted him.

Nikita got out again and began to explore the snow. He was gone a long while. At last he reappeared on the side opposite to that on which he started.

"Andreyitch, are you alive?" he called.

"Here!" shouted Vasili Andreyitch. "What is the matter?"

"I can't make anything out, it is too dark; except some ravines. We must drive to windward again."

They set off once more; Nikita explored again, stumbling through the snow. Again he sat down, again he crept forward, and at last, out of breath, he stopped beside the sledge.

"How now?" asked Vasili Andreyitch.

"Well, I 'm quite tired out. And the horse is done up."

"What are we to do?"

"Wait a minute."

Nikita moved off again, and soon returned.

"Follow me," he said, going in front of the horse.

Vasili Andreyitch no longer gave orders, but implicitly did what Nikita told him.

"Here, this way!" shouted Nikita, stepping quickly to the right. Seizing Mukhortui by the bridle, he turned him toward a snowdrift.

At first the horse resisted; then dashed forward, hoping to leap the drift, but failed, and sank in snow up to the hams.

"Get out!" called Nikita to Vasili Andreyitch, who still sat in the sledge; and taking hold of one shaft, he tried to push the sledge after the horse.

"It 's a pretty hard job, brother," he said to Mukhortui, "but it can't be helped. Na! na! Stir yourself! Just a little!" he called out.

The horse leaped forward, once, twice, but failed to clear himself, and sat back again as if thinking out something.

"Well, friend, this is no good," urged Nikita to Mukhortui. "Now, once more!"

Nikita pulled on the shaft again; Vasili Andreyitch did the same on the opposite side. The horse lifted his head, and made a sudden dash.

"Nu! na! You won't sink; don't be afraid," shouted Nikita.

One plunge, a second, a third, and at last the horse was out from the snowdrift, and stood still, breathing heavily and shaking himself clear. Nikita wanted to lead him on farther, but Vasili Andreyitch, in his two shubas, had so lost his breath that he could walk no more, and dropped into the sledge.

"Let me get my breath a little," he said, unbinding the handkerchief with which, at the village, he had tied the collar of his coat.

"We are all right here; you might as well lie down," said Nikita. "I'll lead him along;" and with Vasili Andreyitch in the sledge, he led the horse by the head about ten paces farther, then up a slight rise, and stopped.

The place where Nikita drew up was not in a hollow, where the snow, swept from the drifts and piled up, might perfectly shelter them; but nevertheless it was partly protected from the wind by the edge of the ravine.

There were moments when the wind seemed to become quieter; but these intervals did not last long, and after them the storm, as if to make up for such a rest, rushed on with tenfold vigor, and tore and whirled the more angrily.

Such a gust of wind swept past as Vasili Andreyitch, with recovered breath, got out of the sledge, and went up to Nikita to talk over the situation. They both instinctively bowed themselves, and waited until the stress should be over. Mukhortui laid back his ears and shook his head. When the blast had abated a little, Nikita took off his mittens, stuck them in his girdle, and having breathed a little on his hands, began to undo the strap from the duga-bow.

"Why are you doing that?" asked Vasili Andreyitch.

"I 'm taking out the horse. What else can we do? I 'm done up," said Nikita, as if apologizing.

"But could n't we drive somewhere?"

"No, we could not. We should only do harm to the horse. The poor beast is worn out," said Nikita, pointing to the creature, who stood there, with heavily heaving sides, submissively waiting for whatever should come. "We must put up for the night here," he repeated, as if

they were at their inn. He began to undo the collar-straps.

The hames fell apart.

"But we shall be frozen, shan't we?" queried Vasili Andreyitch.

"Well, if we are, we cannot help it," said Nikita.

CHAPTER VI

In his two shubas, Vasili Andreyitch was quite warm; especially after his exertion in the snowdrift. But a cold shiver ran down his back when he learned that they really had to spend the night where they were. To calm himself, he sat down in the sledge, and got out his cigarettes and matches.

Meanwhile Nikita went on taking out the horse. He undid the belly-band, took away the reins and collar-strap, and laid the duga-bow aside from the shafts; continuing to encourage the horse by speaking to him.

"Now, come out, come out," he said, leading him clear of the shafts. "We must tie you here. I 'll put a bit of straw for you, and take off your bridle," he went on, doing as he said. "After a bite, you 'll feel ever so much better."

But Mukhortui was not calmed by Nikita's words; uneasily, he shifted his feet, pressed against the sledge, turned his back to the wind, and rubbed his head on Nikita's sleeve.

As if not wholly to reject the treat of straw which Nikita put under his nose, Mukhortui just once seized a wisp out of the sledge, but quickly deciding that there was more important business than to eat straw, he threw it down again, and the wind instantly tore it away and hid it in the snow.

"Now we must make a signal," said Nikita, turning the front of the sledge against the wind; and having tied the shafts together with a strap, he set them on end in front of the sledge. "If the snow covers us, the good folk will see the shafts, and dig us out," said Ni-

kita, slapping his mittens together and pulling them on. "That's what old hands advise."

Vasili Andreyitch had meanwhile opened his shuba, and making a shelter with its folds, he rubbed match after match on the steel box. But his hands trembled, and the kindled matches were blown out by the wind, one after another, some when just struck, others when he thrust them to the cigarette. At last one match burned fully, and lighted up for a moment the fur of his shuba, his hand with the gold ring on the bent forefinger, and the snow-sprinkled straw which stuck out from under the sacking. The cigarette lighted. Twice he eagerly whiffed the smoke, swallowed it, blew it through his mustaches, and would have gone on, but the wind tore away the burning tobacco and sent it whirling after the straw. Even these few whiffs of tobacco-smoke cheered up Vasili Andreyitch.

"Well, we will stop here," he said authoritatively.

"Wait a minute, and I'll make a flag," he said, picking up the handkerchief which he had taken from round his collar and put down in the sledge. Drawing off his gloves, and reaching up, he tied the handkerchief tightly to the strap that held the shafts together.

The handkerchief at once began to beat about wildly; now clinging round a shaft, now streaming out, and cracking like a whip.

"That's a clever piece of work," said Vasili Andreyitch, pleased with what he had done, and getting into the sledge. "We should be warmer together, but there's not room for two," he said.

"I can find a place," said Nikita, "but the horse must be covered; he's sweating, the good fellow. Excuse me," he added, going to the sledge, and drawing the sacking from under Vasili Andreyitch. This he folded, and after taking off the saddle and breeching, covered Mukhortui with it.

"Anyway, it will be a bit warmer, silly," he said, putting the saddle and heavy breeching over the sacking.

"You won't need the cloth, will you? and give me a

little straw," said Nikita, coming back to the sledge after he had finished his work.

Taking these from beneath Vasili Andreyitch, Nikita went behind the sledge, dug there a hole in the snow, stuffed in the straw, and pulling down his hat, wrapping his kaftan well around him, and covering himself with the coarse matting, sat down on the straw, leaning against the bark back of the sledge, which kept off the wind and snow.

Vasili Andreyitch shook his head disapprovingly at what Nikita was doing, as he usually found fault with the peasants' ignorance and stupidity; and he began to make his own arrangements for the night.

He smoothed the remaining straw and heaped it thicker under his side; then he thrust his hands into his sleeves, and settled his head in the corner of the sledge sheltered from the wind in front.

He did not feel sleepy. He lay and thought; thought about one thing only, which was the aim, reason, pleasure, and pride of his life:—about how much money he had made, and might make, and how much other men whom he knew had made and possessed, and the means whereby they gained it and were gaining it; and how he, in like manner, might gain a good deal more. The purchase of the Goryatchkin forest was for him an affair of the utmost importance. He counted on making from this transaction as much as ten thousand! And he began mentally to estimate the value of the forest, which he had inspected in the autumn so carefully as to count all the trees on two desyatins.

"The oak will make sledge-runners. The small stuff will take care of itself. And there 'll be thirty cords of wood to the acre," [1] said he to himself. "At the very worst there 'll be a little less than eighty rubles an acre. There are one hundred and fifty acres."

He reckoned it up mentally and saw that it amounted to about twelve thousand rubles; but without his abacus he could not calculate it exactly.

[1] He says, "Thirty sazhen to the desyatin." A cubic sazhen is equivalent to 2.68 cords; a desyatin is 2.7 acres. In his prospective purchase there are fifty-six desyatins.

"But for all that, I won't pay ten thousand; say eight thousand; besides, one must allow for the bare spaces. I 'll oil the surveyor, — a hundred rubles will do it, — a hundred and fifty, if necessary; he 'll deduct about thirteen acres out of the forest. He is sure to sell for eight; three thousand down. Never fear; he will weaken at that," he thought, pressing his forearm on the pocket-book beneath.

"And how we lost our way after we left the turning, God only knows! The forest and the woodman's hut should be near by. I should like to hear the dogs, but they never bark when they 're wanted, the cursed brutes."

He opened his collar a little from his ear and tried to listen; all he could hear was the same whistle of the wind, the flapping and cracking of the handkerchief on the shafts, and the pelting of the falling snow on the bark matting of the sledge.

He covered himself again.

"If one had only known this beforehand, we had better have stayed where we were. But no matter, we shall get there to morrow. It is only a day lost. In this weather, the others won't get there either."

Then he remembered that on the twenty-first he had to receive the price for some gelded rams, from the butcher.

"I wanted to be there myself, for if he does n't find me, my wife won't know how to receive the money. She 's very inexperienced, she does n't know about the right way of doing things," he continued to reflect, remembering how she had failed in her behavior towards a commissary of police,[1] who had come to pay them a visit the day before, at the feast. "Just a woman, of course. What has she ever seen anywhere? In my father's time, what a house we had! Nothing out of the way, a well-to-do countryman's: a barn and an inn, and that was the whole property. And now in these fifteen years what have I done? A general store, two taverns, a flour-mill, a granary, two farms rented, a

[1] *Stanovoï.*

house and warehouse all iron-roofed," he remembered proudly. "Not as it was in father's time! Who is known over the whole place?[1] Brekhunof.

"And why is this? Because I know my business, I look after things; not like others, who idle or waste their time in foolishness. I don't sleep at night. Storm or no storm, I start out. And of course, the thing is done. People think it 's fun making money. Not at all; you work and rack your brains. You spend your night this way outdoors, and go without sleep! The thoughts whirling in your head are as good as a cushion!" he exclaimed with pride. "They think men get on through luck. Look at the Mironofs, who have their millions, now. Why? They worked. Then God gives. If God only grants me health!"

And the idea that he, also, might become a millionaire like Mironof, who began with nothing, so excited Vasili Andreyitch that he suddenly felt a need to talk to some one. But there was no one. .... If he could only have reached Goryatchkino, he might have talked with the landowner, and "put spectacles on him."

"Whew! how it blows! It will snow us up so that we can't get out in the morning," he thought, as he listened to the rush of the wind, which blew against the front of the sledge, bending it back, and lashed the snow against the bark matting. He lifted himself and looked out: in the white whirling darkness all he could see was Mukhortui's black head, and his back covered with the fluttering matting, and his thick twisted tail; all around, on every side, in front and behind, was the same monotonous white waving mist, occasionally appearing to grow a little lighter, then again growing thicker and denser.[2]

"I was foolish enough yielding to Nikita," he thought. "We ought to have driven on, we should have come out somewhere. We might have gone back to Grishkino, and stayed at Taras's. Now we must sit here all night. Well, what was I thinking about? Yes, that God gives

[1] *Kto gremit*, who thunders.

[2] *Sgushchayushchayasa*: literally, "condensing itself."

to the industrious, and not to the lazy, not to loafers and fools. It 's time for a smoke, too."

He sat up, got his cigarette-case, and stretched himself flat on his stomach, to protect the light from the wind with the flaps of his coat; but the wind got in and put out one match after another. At last he managed to get a cigarette lit, and he began to smoke. The fact that he succeeded greatly delighted him. Though the wind smoked more of his cigarette than he did, nevertheless he got about three puffs, and felt better.

He again threw himself back in the sledge, wrapped himself up, and returned to his recollections and dreams; very unexpectedly he lost himself and fell asleep.

But suddenly something touched him and woke him up. Whether it was Mukhortui pulling the straw from under him, or something within him that startled him, at all events he awoke, and his heart began to beat so quickly and violently that the sledge seemed to be shaking under him.

He opened his eyes. Everything around was the same as before; only it seemed a little lighter.

"The dawn," he said to himself; "it must be nearly morning."

But he instantly remembered that the light was only due to the rising of the moon.

He lifted himself, and looked first at the horse. Mukhortui was standing with his back to the wind, and shivering all over. The snow-covered sacking had fallen off on one side; the breeching had slipped down; the snowy head and the fluttering crest and mane, all were now clearly visible.

Vasili Andreyitch bent over the back of the sledge and looked behind. Nikita was still sitting in the old position which he had first taken. The sacking with which he had protected himself and his feet were covered with snow.

"I 'm afraid the muzhik will be frozen; his clothes are so wretched. I might be held responsible. I declare they 're such senseless people! They truly have n't the slightest forethought!" reflected Vasili Andreyitch;

and he was tempted to take the sacking from the horse, to put over Nikita; but it was cold to get out and stir around, and besides, the horse might freeze to death.

"What made me bring him? It is all her stupidity!" thought Vasili Andreyitch, remembering his unattractive wife; and he turned again to his former place in the front of the sledge.

"My uncle once sat in snow all night, like this," he reflected, "and no harm came of it. And Sevastian also was dug out," he went on, remembering another case, "but he was dead, stiff like a frozen carcass. If we had only stopped at Grishkino, nothing would have happened."

Carefully covering himself, so that the warmth of the fur might not be wasted, but might protect his neck, knees, and the soles of his feet, he shut his eyes, trying to sleep again. But however much he tried, this time he could not lose himself; on the contrary, he felt alert and excited. Again he began to count his gains and the debts due to him; again he began to boast of his success, and to feel proud of himself and his position; but he was all the while disturbed by a lurking fear, and by the unpleasant regret that he had not stopped for the night at Grishkino.

"It would have been good to lie on the bench in a warm room!" He turned from side to side several times; he curled himself up trying to find a better position, more sheltered from the wind and snow, but all the time he felt uncomfortable; he rose again and changed his position, crossed his feet, shut his eyes, and lay silent; but either his crossed feet, in their high felt boots, began to ache, or the wind blew in somewhere; and thus lying for a short time, he again began the disagreeable reflection, how comfortably he would have rested in the warm house at Grishkino. Again he rose, changed his position, wrapped himself up, and again tucked himself in.

Once Vasili Andreyitch fancied he heard a distant cock-crow. He felt glad, and threw back his shuba, and strained his ear to listen; but in spite of all his efforts he could hear nothing but the sound of the wind

whistling against the shafts, and flapping the handkerchief, and the snow lashing the bark matting of the sledge.

Nikita had been motionless all the time, just as he had sat from the first, not stirring or even answering Vasili Andreyitch, though he spoke to him twice.

"He doesn't care in the least; he must be asleep," Vasili Andreyitch thought angrily, looking behind the sledge at Nikita, deeply covered with snow.

Twenty times Vasili Andreyitch thus rose and lay down. It seemed to him this night would never end.

"It must be near morning now," he thought once as he rose and glanced round him. "Let me look at my watch. I shall freeze if I unbutton my coat; but if I only know it is near morning, I shall feel better. We could begin to harness the horse."

At the bottom of his mind, Vasili Andreyitch knew that it could not be anywhere near morning; but he began to feel more and more afraid, and he chose both to assure himself and to deceive himself. He cautiously undid the hooks of his short shuba, then putting his hand in at the bosom, he felt about until he got at the waistcoat. With great trouble, he drew out his silver watch enameled with flowers, and tried to examine it. Without a light, he could make out nothing.

Again he lay down flat on his elbows and his knees, as when he lighted the cigarette; got the matches, and proceeded to strike. This time he was more careful, and feeling for a match with the largest head, ignited it at the first stroke. When he brought the face of the watch into the light he could not believe his eyes.... It was not later than ten minutes past twelve. The whole night was still before him.

"Oh, what a long night!" thought Vasili Andreyitch, feeling the cold run down his back; and buttoning up again and wrapping his shuba round him, he snuggled into the corner of the sledge with the intention of waiting patiently.

Suddenly, above the monotonous roar of the wind, he distinctly heard a new and a living sound. It grew gradually louder, and became quite clear; then began to die

away with equal regularity. There could be no doubt it was a wolf. And this wolf was so near, that down the wind one could hear how he changed his cry by the movement of his jaws. Vasili Andreyitch turned back his collar and listened attentively. Mukhortui listened likewise, pricking up his ears, and when the wolf had ceased his chant he shifted his feet, and neighed warningly.

After this Vasili Andreyitch not only was unable to sleep, but even to keep calm. The more he tried to think of his accounts, of his business, reputation, importance, and property, more and more fear grew upon him; and above all his thoughts, one thought stood out predominantly and penetratingly: — the thought of his rashness in not stopping at Grishkino.

"The forest, — what do I care about the forest?[1] There is plenty of business without that, thank God! Ah, if we had only stayed for the night!" said he to himself. "They say drunken men soon freeze to death," he thought, "and I have had some drink."

Then testing his own sensations, he felt that he began to shiver, either from cold or fear. He tried to wrap himself up and to lie down, as before; but he could not any longer do that. He could not stay in one position, wanted to rise, to do something so as to suppress his gathering fears, against which he felt helpless. Again he got his cigarettes and matches; but only three of the latter remained, and these were bad ones. All three rubbed away without lighting.

"The devil take you, curse you!" he objurgated, himself not knowing whom or what, and he threw away the cigarette. He was about to throw away the matchbox also, but stayed his hand, and thrust it into his pocket instead. He was so agitated that he could no longer remain in his place. He got out of the sledge, and, standing with his back to the wind, set his girdle again, tightly, and low down.

"What is the use of lying down? It is only waiting for death; much better mount the horse and get away!"

[1] *Bog s nim, s lyesom*: literally, "God with it, with the forest."

the thought suddenly flashed into his mind. "The horse will not stand still with some one on his back. It 's all the same to *him*, — thinking of Nikita, — if he does die. What sort of a life has he? He does not care much even about his life, but as for me, — thank God, I have something to live for!" ....

Untying the horse from the sledge, he threw the reins over his neck, and tried to mount, but his shubas and his boots were so heavy that he failed. Then he clambered on the sledge, and tried to mount from that; but the sledge tilted under his weight, and he failed again. At last, on a third attempt, he backed the horse to the sledge, and, cautiously balancing on the edge, got his body across the horse's back. Lying thus for a moment, he pushed himself once, twice, and finally threw one leg over and seated himself, supporting his feet on the loose breeching straps in place of stirrups. The shaking of the sledge roused Nikita, and he got up; Vasili Andreyitch thought he was speaking.

"Listen to you, fool? What, must I die in this way, for nothing?" exclaimed Vasili Andreyitch. Tucking under his knees the loose skirts of his shuba, he turned the horse round, and rode away from the sledge in the direction where he expected to find the forest and the keeper's hut.

CHAPTER VII

Nikita had not stirred since he had covered himself with the matting and taken his seat behind the sledge. Like all men who live with nature, and are acquainted with poverty, he was patient, and could wait for hours, even days, without growing restless or irritated. When his master called him, he heard, but made no answer, because he did not want to stir. Although he still felt the warmth from the tea he had taken, and from the exercise of struggling through the snowdrifts, he knew the warmth would not last long, and that he could not warm himself again by moving about, for he was ex-

hausted, and felt as a horse does when, in spite of the whip, it stops, and its master perceives that it must have food before it can work again. His foot, the one in the torn boot, was numb, and he could no longer feel his great toe. And, moreover, his whole body kept growing colder and colder.

The thought that he might and in all probability would die that night came upon him, but this thought did not seem especially unpleasant or especially awful. It did not seem to him especially unpleasant, because his life had not been a perpetual festival, but rather an incessant round of toil of which he was beginning to weary. And this thought did not seem to him especially awful, because, beyond the masters whom he served here, like Vasili Andreyitch, he felt himself dependent upon the Great Master[1]; upon Him who had sent him into this life, and he knew that even after death he must remain in the power of that Master, and that that Master would not treat him badly.

"Is it a pity to leave what you are practised in, and used to? Well, what's to be done about it? You must get used to new things as well."

"Sins?" he thought, and recollected his drunkenness, the money wasted in drink, his ill-treatment of his wife, his profanity, neglect of church and of the fasts, and all things for which the priest reprimanded him at the confessional. "Of course, these are sins. But then, did I bring them on myself? Whatever I am, I suppose God made me so. Well, and about these sins? How can one help it?"

Thus ran his reflections, and after he had considered what might happen to him that night, he let it have the go-by, and gave himself up to whatever notions and memories came of their own accord into his mind. He remembered Marfa's visit, and the drunkenness among the peasants, and his own abstinence from drink; then he recalled how they had started on their present journey; Taras's izba, and the talk about the break-up of the family; that reminded him of his own lad; then he

[1] *Glavnui Khozyaïn*, "Master-in-chief."

thought of Mukhortui, with the sacking over him for warmth; and his master, rolling round in the sledge, and making it creak.

"I suppose he is vexed and angry because he started out," said Nikita to himself. "A man who lives such a life as his does not want to die; not like people of my kind."

And all these recollections and thoughts interwove and jumbled themselves in his brain, until he fell asleep.

When Vasili Andreyitch mounted the horse, he twisted aside the sledge, and the back of it, against which Nikita was leaning, slid away, and one of the runner-ends struck him in the side. Nikita awoke, and was compelled to change his position. Straightening his legs with difficulty, and throwing off the snow which covered them, he got up. Instantly an agonizing cold penetrated his whole frame. On making out what was happening, he wanted Vasili Andreyitch to leave him the sacking, which was no longer needed for the horse, so that he might put it round himself.

But Vasili Andreyitch did not wait, and disappeared in the mist of snow.

Thus left alone, Nikita considered what he should do. He felt that he had not strength enough to start off in search of some house; and it was no longer possible for him to sit down in his former place, for it was already covered with snow; and he knew he could not get warm in the sledge, having nothing to cover him. There seemed no warmth at all from his kaftan and shuba. It was a bitter moment. He felt as cold as if he had only his shirt on. "Our Father, who art in Heaven," he repeated; and the consciousness that he was not alone but that Some One heard him and would not desert him comforted him. He drew a deep sigh, and keeping the matting over his head, he crept into the sledge and lay down in the place where his master had lain.

But he could not possibly keep warm in the sledge. At first he shivered all over, then the shivering ceased, and, little by little, he began to lose consciousness. Whether he was dying, or falling asleep, he knew not; but he was as ready for the one as for the other.

CHAPTER VIII

MEANWHILE Vasili Andreyitch, using his feet and the straps of the harness, urged the horse in the direction where he, for some cause, expected to find the forest and the forester's hut. The snow blinded his eyes, and the wind, it seemed, was bent on staying him; but with head bent forward, and all the time pulling up his shuba between him and the cold pad, on which he could not settle himself, he kept urging on the horse. The dark bay, though with difficulty, obediently ambled on in the direction to which he was turned.

For five minutes he rode on; as it seemed to him, in a straight line; seeing nothing but the horse's head and the white waste, and hearing only the whistling of the wind about the horse's ears and collar of his own shuba.

Suddenly a dark patch showed in front of him. His heart began to beat with joy, and he rode on toward the object, already seeing in it the walls of village houses. But the dark patch was not stationary, it kept moving, and it was not a village but a patch of tall mugwort, growing on a strip of land and protruding through the snow, and shaking desperately under the blast of the wind which bent their heads all in one direction and whistled through them.

The sight of this mugwort tormented by the pitiless wind somehow made Vasili Andreyitch tremble, and he started to ride away hastily; not perceiving that in approaching the patch of mugwort, he had quite turned out of his first direction, and that now he was heading the opposite way, though he still supposed that he was riding toward where the forester's hut should be. But the horse seemed always to make toward the right, and so Vasili Andreyitch had to guide it toward the left.

Again a dark patch appeared before him; again he rejoiced, believing that now surely this was a village. But once more it was a patch of tall mugwort, once more the dry grass was shaking desperately, and, as

before, frightening Vasili Andreyitch. But it could not be the same patch of grass, for near it was a horse-track, now disappearing in the snow. Vasili Andreyitch stopped, bent down, and looked carefully; a horse-track, not yet snow-covered; it could only be the hoof-prints of his own horse. He had evidently gone round in a small circle.

"And I shall perish in this way," he thought.

To overcome his terror, he urged on the horse with still greater energy, peering into the white mist of snow, wherein he saw nothing but flitting and fitful points of light which vanished the instant he looked at them. Once he thought he heard either the barking of dogs or the howling of wolves, but the sounds were so faint and indistinct, that he could not be sure whether he had heard them or imagined them; and he stopped and began to strain his ears and listen.

Suddenly a terrible, deafening cry beat upon his ears, and everything began to tremble and quake about him. Vasili Andreyitch seized the horse's neck, but that also shook, and the terrible cry grew still more frightful. For some seconds, Vasili Andreyitch could not collect himself, or understand what had happened. It was only this: Mukhortui, whether to encourage himself or to call for help, had neighed, loudly and resonantly.

"Tfu! Plague take you! You cursed brute, how you frightened me!" said Vasili Andreyitch to himself. But even when he understood the cause of his terror, he could not shake it off.

"I must consider and steady my nerves," he said to himself again, and saw at the same time he could not regain his self-control, but kept urging forward the horse without noting that he was now going with the wind, instead of against it. Especially when the horse walked slowly, his body, where it was exposed and where it touched the pad, was freezing and ached. His hands and legs shook and he was short of breath. He could see that he was likely to perish in the midst of this horrible snowy waste, and he could see no way of rescue. He forgot all about the forester's hut, and desired one thing

only,—to get back to the sledge, that he might not perish alone, like that mugwort in the midst of the terrible waste of snow.

Suddenly the horse stumbled under him, caught in a snowdrift, and began to plunge, and fell on his side. Vasili Andreyitch jumped off as he did so, dragging with him the breeching on which his foot was supported, and turned the pad round by holding to it as he jumped.

As soon as Vasili Andreyitch was off his back, the horse struggled to his feet, plunged forward one leap and then another, and neighing again, with the sacking and breeching trailing after him, disappeared, leaving Vasili Andreyitch alone in the snowdrift.

He pressed on in pursuit of the horse, but the snow was so deep, and his shubas were so heavy, that after he had gone not more than twenty paces, sinking over the knee at each step, he was out of breath, and stopped.

"The forest, the sheep, the farms, the shop, the taverns, the iron-roofed house and granary, my son!" thought he, "how can I leave them all? What does this really mean! It cannot be!"

These words flashed through his mind. Then somehow or other he recalled the wind-shaken mugwort which he had ridden past twice, and such a panic seized him that he lost all sense of the reality of what was happening. He asked himself, "Is not this all a dream?"—and tried to wake up. But there was nothing to wake up from! It was actual snow lashing his face and covering him and benumbing his right hand, from which he had dropped the glove; and it was a real desert in which he was now alone, like that mugwort, waiting for inevitable, speedy, and incomprehensible death.

"Queen in heaven, St. Nicholas,[1] teacher of temperance!"

He recalled the Te Deums of the day; the shrine with the black image in a golden chasuble; the tapers

[1] *Svyatitelyu otche Mikolaye.* A semi-Slavonic form; literally, "Bishop Father Nikolai."

which he sold for the shrine, and which, when they were at once returned to him hardly touched by the flame, he used to put back into the store-chest.[1] And he began to implore that same Nicholas — the miracle-worker — to save him, vowing to the saint a Te Deum and tapers.

But in some way, here, he clearly and without a doubt realized that the image, chasuble, tapers, priests, masses, though they were all very important and necessary in their place, in the church, were of no service to him now; and that between those tapers and Te Deums, and his present disastrous plight, there could be no possible connection.

"I must not give up," he said to himself, "I must follow the horse's tracks, or they, too, will be snowed over." This idea struck him, and he made on. "He 'll get away if I don't overtake him. But I must n't hurry or else I shall be worse off and perish still more miserably."

But notwithstanding his resolution to walk quietly, he kept hurrying on, running, falling down every minute, rising and falling again. The hoof-prints were already almost indistinguishable where the snow was not deep. "I am lost!" thought Vasili Andreyitch, "if I lose this track and don't overtake the horse."

But at that instant, casting a glance in front, he saw something dark. It was Mukhortui, and not merely Mukhortui, but the sledge, and the shafts with the handkerchief.

Mukhortui, with the pad twisted round to one side, and the trailed breeching and sacking, was standing, not in his former place, but nearer to the shafts; and was shaking his head, which was drawn down by the bridle beneath his feet.

It turned out that Vasili Andreyitch had stuck in the same ravine into which he and Nikita had previously

[1] It was a part of Vasili Andreyitch's duties as *tserkovnui starosta* to sell the candles which are abundantly used in the Russian service and which, after the mass, are returned and often resold, thus providing no small revenue. — ED.

plunged; that the horse had led him back to the sledge, and that he had dismounted at not more than fifty paces from the place where the sledge lay.

CHAPTER IX

Vasili Andreyitch struggled back to the sledge, and clutched hold of it, and stood so, motionless for a long time, trying to calm himself and to get back his breath. There was no sign of Nikita in his former place, but something covered with snow was lying in the sledge, and Vasili Andreyitch conjectured that it was Nikita. Vasili Andreyitch's terror had now altogether disappeared; if he felt any fear, it was of that state of terror which he had experienced when on the horse, and especially when he was alone in the snowdrift. By any and every means, he must keep away that terror; and in order to keep it away it was necessary for him to do something, to occupy himself with something.

Accordingly, the first thing he did was to turn his back to the wind and throw open his shuba. As soon as he felt a little rested, he shook out the snow from his boots and from his left-hand glove, — the right-hand glove was lost beyond recovery and was undoubtedly already buried somewhere deep in the snow, — then he bound up his girdle again, tight and low-down, as he always did when he was going out of his shop to buy grain from the peasants' carts. He tightened his belt and prepared for action. The first thing which appeared to him necessary to do was to free the horse's leg. So Vasili Andreyitch did this; then, clearing the bridle, he tied Mukhortui to the iron cramp in front of the sledge, as before, and walking round the horse's quarters, he adjusted the pad, the breeching, and the sacking.

But as he did this, he perceived a movement in the sledge, and Nikita's head rose out of the snow that covered it. Obviously with great difficulty, the half-frozen peasant rose and sat up; and in a strange fashion, as

if he were driving away flies, waved his hand before his face. He waved his hand and said something which Vasili Andreyitch interpreted as a call to himself.

Vasili Andreyitch left the sack unadjusted, and went to the sledge.

"What is the matter with you?" he asked. "What are you saying?"

"I am dy-y-ing, that's what's the matter," said Nikita, brokenly, struggling for speech. "Give what I have earned to the lad. Or to the wife; it's all the same."

"What, are you really frozen?" asked Vasili Andreyitch.

"I can feel I've got my death. Forgive.... for Christ's sake...." said Nikita, in a sobbing voice, continuing to wave his hand before his face, as if driving away flies.

Vasili Andreyitch stood for half a minute silent and motionless; then suddenly, with the same resolution with which he used to strike hands over a good bargain, he took a step back, turned up the sleeves of his shuba, and using both hands, began to rake the snow from off Nikita and the sledge. When he had brushed out, Vasili Andreyitch quickly took off his girdle, opened out his shuba, and moving Nikita with a push, he lay down on him, covering him not only with the fur coat, but with the full length of his own body, which glowed with warmth.

Adjusting with his hands the skirts of his coat, so as to come between Nikita and the bark matting of the sledge, and tucking the tail of the coat between his knees, Vasili Andreyitch lay flat, with his head against the bark matting in the sledge-front; and now he no longer could hear either the stirring of the horse or the whistling of the wind; all he could hear was Nikita's breathing. At first, and for a long time, Nikita lay without a sign; then he gave a loud sigh, and moved.

"Ah, there you are! And yet you say 'die.' Lie still, get warm, and somehow we shall...." began Vasili Andreyitch.

But, to his own surprise, he could not speak: because

his eyes were filled with tears, and his lower jaw began to quiver violently. He said no more — only gulped down something which rose in his throat.

"I was well scared, that is clear, and how weak I feel!" he thought of himself. But this weakness not only was not unpleasant to him, but rather gave him a peculiar and hitherto unknown delight.

"That's what we are!" he said to himself, experiencing a strange triumph and emotion. He lay quiet for some time, wiping his eyes with the fur of his shuba and tucking under his knees the right skirt, which the wind kept turning up.

He felt a passionate desire to let some one else know of his happy condition.

"Mikita!" he said.

"It's comfortable, it's warm," came an answer from below.

"So it is, friend! I was nearly lost. And you would have been frozen, and I should have...."

But here again his face began to quiver, and his eyes once more filled with tears, and he could say no more.

"Well, never mind," he thought, "I know well enough about myself, what I know."

And he kept quiet. Thus he lay for a long time.

Nikita warmed him from below, and the fur coat warmed him from above; but his hands, with which he held the coat-skirts down on both sides of Nikita, and his feet, from which the wind kept lifting the shuba, began to freeze. Especially cold was his right hand, unprotected by a glove. But he did not think either of his legs or of his hands. He thought only of how to warm the muzhik who lay beneath him.

Several times he looked at the horse, and saw that his back was uncovered, and the sacking and breeching were hanging down nearly to the snow. He ought to get up and cover the horse; but he could not bring himself to leave Nikita for even a moment, and so disturb that happy situation in which he felt himself; he now no longer had any sense of terror.

"Never fear, we shan't lose him this time," he said

to himself, about his way of warming Nikita, and with the same boastfulness as he used to speak of his buying and selling.

Thus Vasili Andreyitch continued lying an hour and then another and then a third, but he was unconscious of the passage of time.

At first his thoughts were filled with impressions of the snow-storm, the shafts of the sledge, the horse under the duga-bow, all in confusion before his eyes; he remembered Nikita, lying under him; then mingling with these recollections rose others, of the festival, his wife, the commissary of police, the taper-box; then again of Nikita, this time lying under the taper-box. Then came apparitions of peasants selling and buying, and white walls, the iron-roofed houses, with Nikita lying underneath; then all was confused, one thing blending with another; and, like the colors in the rainbow, uniting in one white light, all the different impressions fused into one nothing; and he fell asleep.

For a long time he slept dreamlessly; but before daybreak visions visited him again. It seemed to him that he was once more standing beside the taper-box, and Tikhon's wife was asking him for a five-kopek candle for the festival-day; he wanted to take the taper and give it to her, but he could not move his hands, which hung down, thrust tightly into his pockets. He wanted to walk round the box, but his feet would not move; his goloshes, new and shiny, had grown to the stone floor, and he could neither move them, nor take out his feet.

All at once the box ceased to be a taper-box, and turned into a bed; and Vasili Andreyitch sees himself lying, face downward, on the taper-box, and yet it is his own bed in his own house. And thus he lies and is unable to get up; and yet he must get up, because Ivan Matveyitch, the commissary of police, will soon come for him, and he must go with Ivan Matveyitch either to bargain for the forest, or to set the breeching right on Mukhortui.

He asks his wife: —

"Well, Mikolavna,[1] has he not come yet?"

"No," she says, "he has not."

He hears some one drive up to the front steps. It must be he. No, he has gone past.

"Mikolavna, Mikolavna! what, has he not come yet?"

"No."

And he lies on the bed and is still unable to rise, and is still waiting. And this waiting is painful, and yet pleasant.

All at once, his joy is fulfilled: the expected one has come; not Ivan Matveyitch, the stanovoï, but some one else, and yet the one for whom he has been waiting. He has come, and he calls to him; and he that called is he who had bidden him lie down on Nikita.

And Vasili Andreyitch is glad because that one has visited him.

"I am coming," he cries joyfully. And the cry awakens him!

He wakes; but wakes an entirely different person from what he had been when he fell asleep. He wants to rise, and cannot; to move his arm, and cannot, — his leg, and he cannot do that. He wants to turn his head, and cannot do even so much. He is surprised but not at all disturbed by this. He divines that this is death, and is not at all disturbed even by that. And he remembers that Nikita is lying under him, and that he has got warm, and is alive; and it seems to him that he is Nikita, and Nikita is he; that his life is not in himself, but in Nikita. He makes an effort to listen, and hears Nikita's breathing, even his slight snoring.

"Nikita is alive, and therefore I also am alive!" he says to himself, triumphantly.

He remembers his money, his shop, his house, his purchases and sales, the Mironofs' millions; and it is hard for him to understand why that man called Vasili Brekhunof had troubled himself with all those things with which he had troubled himself.

"Well, he did not know what it was all about," he

[1] Mikolavna, rustic form of Nikolayevna, "daughter of Nikolaï"; the patronymic used familiarly without the given name.

thinks, concerning this Vasili Brekhunof. "I did not know; but now I do know. No mistake this time; *now I know.*"

And again he hears the summons of that one who had before called him.

"I am coming, I am coming," he says with his whole joy-thrilled being. And he feels himself free, with nothing to encumber him more.

And nothing more, in this world, was seen, or heard, or felt by Vasili Andreyitch.

Round about the storm still eddied. The same whirlwinds of snow covered the dead Vasili Andreyitch's shuba, and Mukhortui, all of a tremble, and the sledge, now hardly to be seen, with Nikita lying in the bottom of it, kept warm beneath his dead master.

CHAPTER X

Just before morning Nikita awoke. He was aroused by the cold again creeping along his back. He had dreamt that he was driving from the mill with a cart-load of his master's flour, and that in crossing the brook, as he went past the bridge, the cart got stuck. And he sees himself go beneath the cart, and lift it, straightening up his back. But, wonderful! — the cart does not stir, it sticks to his back, so that he can neither lift it nor get out from under it. It was crushing his loins. And how cold it was! He must get away somehow.

"There! Stop!" he cries to whoever it is that presses his back with the load. "Take the sacks out!"

But the cart still presses him, always colder and colder; and suddenly a peculiar knocking awakes him completely, and he remembers everything. The cold cart, — that was his dead and frozen master, lying upon him. The knocking was from Mukhortui, who had struck twice on the sledge with his hoofs.

"Andreyitch, eh, Andreyitch!" calls Nikita, softly, straightening his back, and already having a suspicion of the truth.

But Andreyitch does not answer, and his body and legs are hard, and cold, and heavy, like iron weights.

"He must be dead. May his be the Kingdom of Heaven!" thinks Nikita.

He turns his head, digs with his hand through the snow about him, and opens his eyes. It is daylight. The wind still whistles through the shafts, and the snow is still falling; but with a difference, not lashing upon the bark matting, as before, but silently covering the sledge and horse, ever deeper and deeper; and the horse's breathing and stirring are no more to be heard.

"He must be frozen, too," thinks Nikita.

And, in fact, those hoof-strokes on the sledge were the last struggles of Mukhortui, by that time quite benumbed, to keep on his legs.

"God, Father, it seems Thou callest me as well," says Nikita, to himself. "Let Thy holy will be done. But it is hard..... Still you can't die twice, and you must die once. If it would only come quicker!" ....

And he draws in his arm again, shutting his eyes; and he loses consciousness, with the conviction that this time he is really going to die altogether.

At dinner-time on the next day, the peasants with their shovels dug out Vasili Andreyitch and Nikita, only seventy yards from the road, and half a verst from the village. The snow had hidden the sledge, but the shafts and the handkerchief were still visible. Mukhortui, up to his belly in snow, with the breeching and sacking trailing from his back, stood all whitened, his dead head pressed in on the apple of his throat; his nostrils were fringed with icicles, his eyes filled with frost and frozen round as with tears. In that one night he had become so thin, that he was nothing but skin and bones.

Vasili Andreyitch was stiffened like a frozen carcass, and he lay with his legs spread apart, just as he was when they rolled him off Nikita. His prominent hawk-eyes were frozen, and his open mouth under his clipped mustache was filled with snow.

But Nikita, though chilled through, was alive. When he was roused, he imagined he was already dead, and

that what they were doing with him was happening, not in this world, but in another. When he heard the shouts of the peasants who were digging him out and rolling the frozen Vasili Andreyitch from him he was surprised, at first, to think that in the other world, also, peasants should be shouting so, and that they had the same kind of a body. But when he understood that he was still here, in this world, he was rather sorry than glad; especially when he realized that the toes of both his feet were frozen.

Nikita lay in the hospital for two months. They cut off three toes from him, and the others recovered, so that he was able to work. For twenty years more he went on living, first as a farm-laborer, latterly as a watchman. He died at home, just as he wished, only this year, — laid under the holy images, with a lighted wax taper in his hands.

Before his death, he asked forgiveness from his old wife, and forgave her for the cooper; he took leave of his son and the grandchildren; and went away truly pleased that, in dying, he released his son and daughter-in-law from the added burden of his keep, and that he himself was, this time, really going out of a life grown wearisome to him, into that other one which with every passing year had grown clearer and more desirable to him.

Whether he is better off, or worse off, there, in the place where he awoke after that real death, whether he was disappointed or found things there just as he expected, is what we shall all of us soon learn.

THE KREUTZER SONATA

CHAPTER I

"But I say unto you that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." — MATT. v. 28.

"The disciples say unto him, If the case of the man is so with his wife, it is not expedient to marry. But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, but they to whom it is given." — MATT. xix. 10, 11.

IT was early spring. We had been traveling for more than twenty-four hours. Passengers with tickets for more or less distant places had been entering and leaving our carriage, but there were four of us who had been on the train from the very start: — a weary-faced lady, neither beautiful nor young, who wore a hat and a semi-masculine paletot, and smoked cigarettes; her companion, a talkative man of forty, with neat, new luggage; and thirdly a rather short and very reserved gentleman not by any means old, but with curly hair prematurely turning gray, with very nervous motions, and with extraordinarily brilliant eyes which kept roving from object to object. He wore an old paletot with a lamb's-wool collar, made by an expensive tailor, and a high lamb's-wool hat. Under his paletot, when it was thrown open, were visible a *poddyovka*, or sleeveless kaftan, and a Russian embroidered shirt. The peculiarity of this gentleman consisted in the fact that he from time to time produced strange noises like a cough or like a laugh begun and broken off. This gentleman, during the whole journey, had carefully avoided all acquaintance and intercourse with the other passengers. If any of his neighbors spoke to him, he replied briefly and stiffly, and for the most part he either read or smoked, gazing out of the window, or else, getting

his provisions out of his old sack, drank tea or ate luncheon.

It seemed to me that he was oppressed by his loneliness, and several times I was tempted to speak with him; but whenever our eyes met, as often happened, since we sat diagonally opposite each other, he turned away and devoted himself to his book or looked out of the window.

During one stop at a large station, just before the evening of our second day, this nervous gentleman left the carriage to get some hot water, and made himself some tea. The gentleman with the neat new luggage, a lawyer, as I afterward learned, went out also with the cigarette-smoking lady in the semi-masculine paletot, to drink tea in the station. During the absence of the gentleman and lady several new persons entered our carriage, and among them a tall, closely shaven, wrinkled old man, evidently a merchant, in a shuba of American polecat fur and a cloth cap with a huge vizor. This merchant sat down opposite the lawyer, and immediately entered into conversation with a young man, apparently a merchant's *prikashchik*, or manager, who entered the carriage at the same station.

I was sitting diagonally opposite, and while the train was stationary and no one was passing between us, I could hear snatches of their conversation.

The merchant at first explained that he was on his way to an estate of his which was situated only one station distant. Then, as usual, they began to talk about prices, about trade, and how Moscow does business at the present time; and then they discussed the Fair at Nizhni-Novgorod.

The merchant's clerk began to tell about the merrymaking at the Fair, of some rich merchant whom both of them knew; but the old man did not let him finish: he began to tell about the merrymakings which had taken place in former times at Kunavino, and which he himself had enjoyed. He was evidently proud of the share which he had taken in them, and with manifest delight he related how he and this same common acquain-

tance had once got drunk at Kunavino, and played such tricks that he had to tell about it in a whisper, whereat the clerk burst out in a hearty fit of laughter which filled the whole carriage, and the old man also laughed, displaying two yellow teeth.

Not expecting to hear anything interesting, I got up to go out on the platform till the train should start. At the door I met the lawyer and his lady, talking in a very animated manner as they walked.

"You won't have time," said the sociable lawyer. "The second bell will ring in a moment."

And in fact I had not even time to walk to the end of the carriage before the bell rang. When I got back to my place the lively conversation was still going on. The old merchant sat silent in front of them, sternly looking straight ahead, and occasionally expressing his disapprobation by chewing on his teeth.

"Whereupon she explained to her husband up and down" — the lawyer was saying with a smile as I passed them — "that she could not and, moreover, she would not live with him since...."

And he proceeded to tell something more which I could not hear. Behind me came still other passengers, then came the conductor, followed by a guard on the run, and there was considerable noise for a time, so that I could not hear what they were talking about.

When it grew quieter the lawyer's voice was heard again; but the conversation had evidently gone over from a particular instance to general considerations. The lawyer was saying that the question of divorce was now occupying general attention in Europe, and that with us in Russia the phenomenon was appearing more and more frequently.

Noticing that his voice alone was heard, the lawyer cut his words short, and addressed himself to the old man.

"It did n't use to be so in old times; is n't that so?" he remarked, smiling pleasantly.

The old man was about to make some answer; but at this moment the train started, and, taking off his cap, he

began to cross himself and to whisper a prayer. The lawyer, turning his eyes away, waited politely. Having finished his prayer and crossed himself thrice, the old man put on his cap and pulled it down, settling it in its place, and he began to speak.

"The same thing took place, sir, in old times, only less frequently," said he. "At the present time it can't help happening. People have grown cultured!"

The train, moving along more and more rapidly, thundered over the sleepers, and it was hard for me to hear; but it was interesting, and I took a seat nearer. My neighbor, the nervous, bright-eyed gentleman, was also evidently much interested, and listened, but without moving from his place.

"In what respect are we ill-educated?" asked the lady, with a scarcely perceptible smile. "Do you mean that it would be better for men and women to get married as they used to do in old times, when the bride and bridegroom never even saw each other?" she went on asking, replying after the fashion of many women, not to her neighbor's words, but to the words which she thought he would say.

"People did not know whether they would be able to love each other or not, but married whoever fell to their lot; yes, and often they were tortured their whole lives long! So you think that our old way was the best, do you?" she went on, addressing her discourse to me, and to the lawyer, and least of all to the old man with whom she was talking.

"We have already become very cultured," repeated the merchant, looking scornfully at the lady, and leaving her question unanswered.

"I should like to know how you explain the connection between culture and matrimonial quarrels," said the lawyer, with a scarcely perceptible smile.

The merchant was about to say something, but the lady interrupted him.

"No, that time has already passed," said she. But the lawyer checked her: —

"No, permit him to express his thought." ....

"The absurdities of culture," said the old man, resolutely.

"People who do not love each other marry, and then they wonder that they get along inharmoniously," said the lady, hastily, glancing at the lawyer and then at me, and even at the clerk, who had got up in his seat and was standing with his elbow leaning on the back of the chair, and listening to the conversation with a smile. "You see animals only can be paired off in this way as the master may desire, but men and women have their own individual preferences and attachments," said the lady, evidently wishing to say something severe to the old merchant.

"When you speak thus, you speak to no purpose, madame," said the old man. "Animals are brutes, but man has a law."

"Well, how can one live with a man when there is no love?" insisted the lady, eager to express her opinion, which apparently seemed to her very novel.

"In former times they did not discuss this," said the old man, in a magisterial tone; "it is only a recent development. At any pretext the wife cries out: 'I will leave you.' Even among the peasantry this new method has come into fashion. 'Na,' says the muzhik's wife, 'here are your shirts and drawers, but I am going off with Vanka; his hair is curlier than yours.' Argument is no good. For a woman the first thing needed is fear."

The clerk looked at the lawyer and at the lady and at me, evidently repressing a smile, and ready either to laugh or to approve of the merchant's argument according as it was received by the company.

"Fear of what?" asked the lady.

"Why, of course, fear of her hu-us-band..... That kind of fear."

"But, batyushka, the day for that sort of thing has gone by," said the lady, with no little asperity.

"No, madame, the time for that can never go by. As Eve the woman was created out of the man's rib, so it will remain till the end of time," said the old man,

and he nodded his head so sternly and triumphantly that the clerk instantly decided that the victory was on the merchant's side, and he burst out into a loud laugh.

"Yes, that is the way you men decide," said the lady, not yielding, and looking at us. "They give themselves full liberty, but you want to keep the woman in the terem.[1] To you, of course, all things are permitted."

"No one gives any such permission, but it is a fact man does not make his family increase, but woman[2] is a fragile vessel," suggested the merchant. The dictatorialness of the merchant's tone evidently impressed his hearers, and even the lady felt crushed, but still she would not give in.

"Yes, but I think you will agree that a woman is a human being, and has feelings as well as a man. Well, then, what is she going to do if she does not love her husband?"

"Not love her husband?" exclaimed the merchant, repeating her words in a savage tone, making a grimace with his lips and his eyebrows. "Never fear, she should come to love him."

This unexpected argument especially pleased the clerk, and he gave vent to a grunt of approbation.

"But that is not so, she may not come to love him," insisted the lady; "and if there is no love, then they ought not to be compelled to this."

"But if a woman is false to her husband, what then?" asked the lawyer.

"That is not to be supposed," said the old man; "he must look out for that."

"But if it does happen, what then? It has occurred." ....

"Yes, there are cases, but not among us," said the old man.

All were silent. The clerk changed his position, leaned forward a little more, and evidently wishing not to be left out of the conversation, began with a smile: —

[1] The women's quarters in the ancient Russian *ménage*, which was thoroughly Oriental.

[2] *Zenshchina-zhena*; literally, woman-wife.

"Well, there was a scandal arose in the house of a fine young fellow in our place. It was very hard to decide about it. It happened that the woman was very fond of amusements, and she began to play the devil; but her husband was a reasonable and progressive man. At first she flirted with a counting-house clerk. Her husband argued kindly with her; she would not stop. She did all sorts of dirty tricks and even stole his money. And he flogged her. What good did that do? She only acted worse. Then she had an intrigue with an unchristened Jew, if I may say so. What could he do? He turned her off entirely, and so he lives like a bachelor, and she has become a gadabout."

"That was because he was a fool," said the old man. "If at the very beginning he had not given her her head, but had given her a good sound berating, she would have been all right, I tell you. She must not have her own way at first. Don't trust a horse in the field, or your wife in your house."

At this moment the conductor came along to take up the tickets for the next station. The old man surrendered his.

"Yes," said he, "we've got to restrain the female sex betimes, or else everything will go to ruin."

"Yes, but you were just telling how you married men enjoyed yourselves at the fair at Kunavino," said I, unable to restrain myself.

"That was a personal matter," said the merchant, and he relapsed into silence.

When the whistle sounded the merchant got up, took his bag from under the seat, wrapped his shuba round him, and, lifting his cap, went out to the platform.

CHAPTER II

As soon as the old man had gone out, several voices spoke up at once.

"An old Testament patriarch," exclaimed the clerk.

"The 'Domostroï'[1] come to life," said the lady. "What savage notions of woman and marriage."

"Yes, indeed, we are still far from the European notions of marriage," said the lawyer.

"Well, the principal thing these men cannot understand," said the lady, "is that marriage without love is not marriage, that love alone consecrates marriage, and that the only true marriage is that which love consecrates."

The clerk listened and smiled, desiring to remember for future use as much as he could of the clever conversation.

In the midst of the lady's sentence, there was heard a sound just behind me like an interrupted laugh or a sob, and looking around we saw my neighbor, the bright-eyed, gray-haired, solitary gentleman, who during the conversation, which had evidently interested him, had unobtrusively drawn near us. He was standing with his hand resting on the back of the seat, and was evidently very much agitated; his face was red and the muscles of his cheek twitched.

"What is that love .... that love .... which consecrates marriage?" he asked, in a stammering voice.

The lady, seeing the agitated state of the speaker, tried to answer him as gently and circumstantially as possible.

"True love. It is that love between a man and a woman which makes marriage possible," said the lady.

"Yes, but what do you mean by true love," said the bright-eyed gentleman, smiling awkwardly and timidly.

"Every one knows what true love is," said the lady, evidently wishing to cut short her speech with him.

"But I don't know," said the gentleman. "You must define what you mean by it."

"Why?.... It is very simple," said the lady, but she hesitated. "Love .... love is the, is the exclusive pref-

[1] The "Domostroï" was the famous code of household manners and customs, compiled probably from earlier treatises by Monk Sylvester, who lived during the reign of Tsar Ivan IV. about the middle of the sixteenth century. It was rediscovered and published in 1849. — Ed.

erence which a man or woman feels for one person out of all the rest in the world," said she.

"A preference for how long a time? For a month or two months or half an hour?" asked the gray-haired man, and laughed.

"No, but excuse me, you are evidently not talking about the same thing."

"Yes, I am talking about the same thing."

"She says," interrupted the lawyer, and indicating the lady, "that marriage ought to result in the first place from an attachment, from love, if you will, and that if such a love actually exists, then only marriage furnishes of itself, so to speak, some consecration. Therefore, every marriage where there is no genuine attachment as a foundation — love, if you say so — has no moral obligation. Do I express your idea correctly?" said he, addressing the lady.

The lady by an inclination of her head expressed her concurrence with his interpretation of her idea.

"Therefore ...." the lawyer was about to continue, but the nervous gentleman, with his eyes all on fire, evidently restraining himself with difficulty, began, without allowing the lawyer to proceed: —

"No, I *am* speaking about the same thing, about the preference that one man or one woman has for one person above all others, and I simply ask, 'How long is this preference to last?'"

"How long? why, sometimes it lasts a whole lifetime," said the lady, shrugging her shoulders.

"Yes, but that is true only in novels, but never in real life. In real life this preference for one person rather than another may occasionally last for a year, more frequently it is measured by months, or even by weeks or days or hours," said he, evidently knowing that he was surprising every one by his opinion, and well satisfied with it.

"Oh, what are you saying?" .... "No, excuse me!" .... "Oh, no!" three of us exclaimed with one voice. Even the clerk uttered a disapproving grunt.

"Yes, I know," interrupted the gray-haired gentleman.

"You are speaking of what is supposed to exist, but I am speaking of what does exist. Every man feels for every pretty woman what you call love."

"Oh, what you say is awful. Surely there exists among human beings that feeling which is called love, and which lasts not merely for months and years, but for whole lives!"

"No, I don't admit it. If it is granted even that a man may keep his preference for a given woman all his life, the woman in all probability will prefer some one else, and so it always has been in the world and always will be," said he; and, taking out a cigarette-case, he began to smoke.

"But it may be reciprocal," said the lawyer.

"No, it is impossible," he insisted, "just as impossible as that in a load of peas there should be two peas exactly alike, side by side. And over and above this improbability there is also the likelihood of satiety. That one or the other should love the same person a whole life long is as to say that a single candle would burn forever," said he, eagerly drawing in the smoke of his cigarette.

"But you are talking about carnal love; don't you admit that there is a love based on a unity of ideals, on a spiritual affinity?" asked the lady.

"Spiritual affinity! Unity of ideals!" repeated he, emitting his peculiar sound. "But in that case there is no reason why we should not sleep together, — excuse my brutality, — why, it is the very consequence of this unity of ideals that people go to bed together," said he, and he laughed nervously.

"But pardon me," said the lawyer, "what you say is contradicted by the facts. ....We see that marriage exists, that all the human race, or the majority of it, lives a married life, and many live honorably all their days under the marriage relation."

The gray-haired gentleman again laughed.

"You were just saying that marriage is founded on love, but when I expressed my doubt of the existence of love except the sentimental kind, you try to prove the

existence of love by the fact that marriages exist. But marriages in our day are all falsehood."

"Oh, no, excuse me," exclaimed the lawyer; "I only say that marriages have always existed and still exist."

"Exist? Yes, but why do they exist? They have existed and exist for people who see in marriage something sacred — a sacrament which is entered into before God — for such people it exists. Among us, people get married, seeing nothing in marriage except copulation, and the result is either deception or violence. When it is deception it is easy to endure. Husband and wife only deceive people into believing that they are living a monogamous marriage, but they are really practising polygamy and polyandry. It is filthy, but still it is the fashion; but when, as happens oftener than otherwise, men take on themselves an external obligation to live together all their lives long, — and even from the second month they hate each other, desire to separate, and yet they go on living, — then results that terrible hell from which they try to escape by intoxication, by fighting duels, by killing and poisoning themselves and others," said he, talking more and more rapidly, and growing more and more excited. It was embarrassing.

"Yes, without doubt there are critical episodes in married life," said the lawyer, wishing to cut short this unseemly and exciting conversation.

"I imagine you have guessed who I am," said the gray-haired gentleman, quietly and with a certain appearance of calmness.

"No, I have not that pleasure."

"The pleasure will not be great. My name is Pozdnuishef; I am the man in whose life happened that critical episode to which you just hinted — the episode of a man killing his wife," said he, swiftly glancing at each one of us.

No one found anything to say, and we all kept silence.

"Well, it is immaterial," said he, emitting his peculiar grunt. "However, excuse me, I will not trouble you any more."

"Don't mention it," said the lawyer, himself not knowing exactly what he was saying.

But Pozdnuishef, not heeding him, quickly turned round and went back to his place. The gentleman talked in whispers with the lady. I sat down with Pozdnuishef and said nothing, as I was unable to think of anything to say to him. It was too dark to read, and so I shut my eyes and pretended that I was going to sleep.

Thus we rode in silence till we reached the next station. At that station the gentleman and lady were transferred to another carriage, concerning which they had arranged beforehand with the conductor. The merchant's superintendent got into a comfortable position on his sofa and went to sleep. Pozdnuishef kept smoking, and drank his tea, which he got boiling hot at the station.

When I opened my eyes and looked at him, he suddenly turned to me with an expression of resolution and exasperation: —

"Maybe it is disagreeable for you to be sitting with me, now that you know who I am. If that is so, I will leave you."

"Oh, not at all, I beg of you."

"Well, then, would n't you like some? Only it is rather strong."

And he poured me out some tea.

"They say .... but then they all lie .... " said he.

"What are you speaking about?" I asked.

"Always about the same thing — about 'love' — and what people mean by it. Don't you want to sleep?"

"Not at all."

"Then, if you would like, I will relate to you how I was led by this very same kind of love to do what I did."

"I should indeed, unless it would be painful for you."

"No, it is hard for me to hold my tongue. You drink your tea — or is it too strong for you?"

The tea was really like beer, but I drank a glass of it.

At this moment the conductor came along. Pozdnuishef silently followed him with angry eyes, and did not begin until he had left the car.

CHAPTER III

"Well, then, I will tell you. But are you sure you would like to have me?"

I assured him that I was very eager to hear him. He remained silent, rubbed his face with his hands, and began: —

"If I tell you, I must begin at the very beginning, I must tell you how and why I got married, and what I was before I married.

"Up to the time of my marriage I lived as all men live; that is, all the men in my circle. I am a landed proprietor and a university graduate, and I have been marshal of the nobility. Up to the time of my marriage I lived as all men live, — a dissipated life; and, like all the young men of our circle, though living a dissipated life, I was persuaded that I was living as I ought. Regarding myself, I thought that I was a charming person, that I was a perfectly moral man. I was no vulgar seducer, I had no unnatural tastes, I did not make this sort of thing my chief object in life, as did many of my intimates; I indulged in dissipation only moderately, decently, for my health's sake; I avoided such women as might, by the birth of a child, or by the force of attachment to me, entangle me. However, there may have been children and there may have been attachments; but I acted as if there was nothing of the sort, I not only considered this sort of thing moral, but I was proud of it."

He paused, emitted his peculiar sound, as he apparently always did when a new thought occurred to him.

"And precisely here is the chief viciousness of it all," he cried. "Depravity does not lie in anything physical; depravity does not imply any physical deformity; depravity, genuine depravity, consists in freeing oneself

from the moral relations to women with whom you enter into physical relations. And this emancipation I arrogated to myself as a virtue. I remember how one time I tormented myself because I had not paid a woman, who apparently loved me and had given herself to me, and I was only rendered happy again when I sent her the money, so as to show her thereby that I did not consider myself morally bound to her. Do not shake your head as if you agreed with me," he suddenly cried. "You see I know that kind of trick. All of you, in the best circumstances, unless you are a rare exception, have just such views as I had then. Well, no matter, please excuse me," he went on. "But this is the whole trouble and it is awful! awful! awful!"

"What is awful?" I asked.

"The abyss of error in which we live in relation to women, and our relations to them. It is true I cannot talk with any calmness in regard to this, and the reason I cannot is that episode which took place in my life. But ever since that episode occurred, my eyes have been opened, and I have seen everything in an entirely different light — exactly the opposite — exactly the opposite."

He smoked his cigarette, and, leaning his elbows on his knees, went on talking again. In the darkness I could not see his face, but above the rattle and rumble of the train I could hear his suggestive, pleasant voice.

CHAPTER IV

"Yes, only by tormenting myself as I have, only by means of this have I learned where the root of the whole trouble is; have I learned what must be, and therefore have come to see the whole horror of what is.

"Now be kind enough to see, just here, how and when began that which led me to that episode of which I have spoken. It began when I was not quite sixteen years old. It happened when I was still in the gymna-

sium, and my oldest brother was a student in the first class. I had not known women at that time, but like all the unfortunate boys of our circle, I was by no means an innocent child. Two years before I had been corrupted by coarse boys; already woman, not any particular woman, but woman as a sweet something, woman, any woman — woman in her nakedness — had already begun to torment me. My solitudes were unchaste. I was tormented as ninety-nine per cent of our boys are tormented. I was horror-struck, I struggled, I prayed, and — I fell! My imagination was already corrupt. I, myself, was corrupt, but the final step had not yet been taken. I was ruined by myself, even before I had put my hands on another human being. But here a comrade of my brother, a gay young student, a so-called 'good fellow,' — in other words the greatest good-for-nothing possible, — who had already taught us to drink and to play cards, persuaded us after a drinking-bout to go *there*.

"We went. My brother also had been innocent, and he fell the same night; and I, a boy of fifteen, polluted myself and accomplished the pollution of a woman, not at all understanding the enormity of what I was doing. You see I had never heard from any of my elders that what I was doing was wrong. And even now no one ever hears so. To be sure it is contained in the Ten Commandments, but the Ten Commandments seem to be used only in order to pass the priest's examination, and even then are not regarded as very important, not nearly so much so as the rule for the use of *ut* in conditional sentences.

"Thus I had never heard a single one of my elders, whom I respected, say that this was wrong. On the contrary, I heard men whom I respected declare that it was a good thing. I heard them say that my struggles and sufferings would be relieved after that. I heard it, and I read it, and heard my elders say that it was good for the health; from my comrades I heard that there was merit, that there was gallantry, in such conduct. So that, as a rule, there is nothing to be

anticipated from it except beneficial effects. Danger of disease? But even that you see is taken care of. A solicitous government looks out for that. It looks after and regulates the activity of houses of 'indulgence,' and makes lewdness safe for gymnasium students. And doctors for a consideration do the same. Thus it comes about. They affirm that lewdness is good for the health, they make a regular institution of lewdness. I know of mothers who see to it that their sons' health is regulated in this way. And Science follows them into the houses of 'indulgence.'"

"Why Science?" I asked.

"What are doctors? The priests of Science. Who corrupt young men, declaring that this thing is necessary for the health? They do.

"But it is certain that if one per cent of the energy that is employed in the cure of syphilis were expended in the eradication of lewdness, syphilis would long ago have become only a memory. But instead the energy is expended, not in the eradication of lewdness, but in the guaranteeing the safety of lewdness. Well, that is not the trouble. The trouble consists in this, that with me, as with nine out of ten, if not even more, not only of our class, but of all, even of the peasantry, the horrible fact exists that I fell, not by reason of yielding to a single temptation of the charm of any special woman — no, no special woman led me astray; but I fell because those immediately around me saw, in what was really a fall, some a lawful act, a regulator advantageous for the health, others, a most natural and not only simple, but even innocent, diversion for a young man.

"I did not even realize that this was a fall; I simply began to give myself up to those pleasures, to those necessities, which, as it was suggested to me, were peculiar to a certain degree of lewdness, — gave myself up to this form of dissipation just as I had begun to drink and to smoke. And yet there was something peculiar and pathetic in this first fall. I well remember how immediately, even before I left that room, a feeling

of sadness, of deep sadness, came over me, so that I felt like weeping, weeping the loss of my innocence, for a forever sullied relationship to womanhood. Yes, the natural, simple relationship that I had enjoyed with women was for evermore impossible. Purity of relationship with any woman was at an end, and could never be again. I had become what is called a libertine. And to be a libertine is to be in a physical condition like that of a morphiomaniac, a drunkard, or a smoker. As the morphiomaniac, the drunkard, the smoker, is no longer a normal man, so a man who uses women for his own pleasure is no longer normal, but is a man forever spoiled — is a libertine. As the drunkard and the morphiomaniac can be instantly recognized by his face, by his actions, so it is with the rake. The libertine may restrain himself, may struggle with his inclinations, but his simple, pure, frank, and fraternal relations with woman are no longer possible. By the very way in which he looks at a young woman, and stares at her, the libertine is to be recognized. And I became a libertine, and I remained one, and that was my ruin.

CHAPTER V

"Yes, so it was. So it went farther and farther, and every kind of depravity ensued. My God! When I remember all my abominable actions in this particular, I am overwhelmed with horror. I also remember how my comrades used to laugh at my so-called innocence. And when you hear about our gilded youth, our officers, our young Parisians ....

"And all these gentlemen, and I, when we, libertines of thirty, having on our souls hundreds of the most varied and horrible crimes against woman, when we, rakes of thirty, come into the drawing-room or the ball-room, freshly washed, cleanly shaven, well-perfumed, in immaculate linen, in evening dress or uniform — what emblems of purity, how charming we are! ....

"Just think what ought to be and what is! It ought

to be that when such a gentleman comes into the society of my sister, or my daughter, I, knowing about his life, what it is, should go to him, draw him quietly to one side, and say in a confidential whisper: —

"'Galubchik, you see I know exactly how you are living, how you are spending your nights and with whom. This is no place for you. Here are pure, innocent women and girls. Please go.'

"So it ought to be; but in reality, when such a gentleman makes his appearance, or when he dances with my sister or my daughter, clasping her in his arms, we rejoice if he is rich and well connected. Perhaps he honors my daughter after Rigolbozh. Even if traces of his disease still remain, it is of no consequence, the cure is easy nowadays. I know that some girls of the highest society have been given by their parents with enthusiasm to men affected with certain diseases. Oh, what rottenness! But the time is coming when this rottenness and falsehood will be cured."

Several times he emitted his strange noises and sipped his tea. His tea was terribly strong. There was no water at hand to weaken it. I was conscious that the two glasses which I had drunk had greatly excited my nerves. The tea also must have had a great effect on him, because he kept growing more and more excited. His voice kept growing louder and more energetic. He kept changing his position; at one moment he would pick up his hat, then he would put it on again; and his face kept strangely changing in the twilight in which we were sitting.

"Well, that was the way I lived until I was thirty years of age, never for a moment abandoning my intention of getting married and arranging for myself the most lofty and unsullied existence, and with this end in view I looked at every girl who came under observation," he continued. "I was soiled with the rottenness of lewdness, and at the same time I was looking round for a girl who by her purity might meet my demands. Many of them I instantly rejected on the ground that they were not sufficiently pure for me; at last I found

one whom I thought worthy of me. She was one of the two daughters of a man in the government of Penza, who had formerly been very rich, but was at that time ruined. One evening, after we had been somewhere in a boat and were returning home by moonlight, and I was sitting next her and admiring her well-proportioned figure, clad in a jersey, and her curly locks, I suddenly made up my mind that she was the one. It seemed to me that evening that she understood everything I felt and thought, and I thought the most elevated thoughts. In reality it was simply the fact that her jersey was especially becoming to her and so were her curls, and that after I had spent a day in her immediate presence I wanted to be still closer to her.

"It is a marvelous thing how full of illusion is the notion that beauty is an advantage. A beautiful woman says all sorts of foolishness, you listen and you do not hear any foolishness, but what you hear seems to you wisdom itself. She says and does vulgar things, and to you it seems lovely. Even when she does not say stupid or vulgar things, but is simply beautiful, you are convinced that she is miraculously wise and moral.

"I returned home enthusiastic, and resolved that she was high above all moral perfection, and that she was therefore fit to be my wife; and the next day I made my proposal.

"See what an entanglement it was. Out of a thousand married men, not only in our rank, but unfortunately also in the people, there is scarcely one who, like Don Juan, would not have been married already not merely ten times, but even a hundred or a thousand times, before the marriage ceremony.

"It is true there are now, so I hear, and I believe it, some young men who live pure lives, feeling and knowing that this is no joke, but a serious matter.

"God help them! But in my time there was not one such out of ten thousand. And all know this and pretend that they do not know it. In all novels the feelings of the heroes, the ponds, the bushes around which they wander, are described in detail; but though their mighty

love to some particular maiden is described, nothing is said about what the interesting hero was doing before, not a word about his frequenting 'houses of indulgence,' about his relations with chambermaids, cooks, and other women. .... Improper novels of this kind — if there are any — are not put into the hands of those who most of all need to know about these things — that is, young women.

"At first they pretend before young women that this form of dissipation, which fills half of the life of our cities, and of our villages also, does not exist at all.

"Afterward they become so accustomed to this hypocrisy that at last they come actually to believe that all of us are moral men and live in a moral world! Girls, poor things, really believe in this with perfect seriousness.

"Thus did my unhappy wife believe. I remember how, after I became engaged to her, I showed her my diary, in which she might learn as much as she would like, even though it were very little, of my past, and especially regarding the last intrigue in which I had been engaged; for she might hear about this from others, and so I felt it necessary to tell her. I remember her horror, her despair, and disillusionment when she knew it all and realized what it meant. I saw that she was tempted to throw me over then. And why did n't she do it?" ....

He emitted his peculiar sound, took another swallow of tea, and paused.

CHAPTER VI

"No, on the whole it is much better, ever so much better so," he cried. "I deserved it. But that is not the point. I mean that in this business the only persons deceived are the poor unfortunate girls.

"Their mothers certainly know this, their mothers know it as well as any one, because they have been told by their husbands. And they pretend that they believe in the purity of men, though in reality they do not at all. They know by what bait to catch men for themselves

and for their daughters. But you see we men don't know, and we don't know because we don't want to know; but women know perfectly well that the loftiest, and as we call it the most poetic, love depends, not on moral qualities, but on physical proximity and then on the way of doing up the hair, the complexion, the cut of the gown. Ask an experienced coquette who has set herself the task of entrapping a man, which she would prefer to risk: being detected in falsehood, cruelty, even immorality, in the presence of the one whom she is trying to entice, or to appear before him in a badly made or unbecoming gown, — and every time she would choose the first. She knows that man merely lies when he talks about lofty feelings — all he wants is the body — and so he pardons all vulgarities, but he would never pardon an ugly, unbecoming, unfashionable costume.

"The coquette knows this consciously; every innocent girl knows this unconsciously, just as animals know it.

"Hence these abominable jerseys, these tournures, these naked shoulders, arms, and almost bosoms. Women, especially those that have been through the school of marriage, know very well that talk on the highest topics is all talk; but what man wants is the body, and everything which displays it in a deceptive but captivating light, and they act accordingly. If we should once forget that we are accustomed to this indecency which has become second nature, and look at the life of our upper classes as it really is, in all its shamelessness, it would appear like one luxurious 'house of indulgence.'

"Don't you agree with me? Excuse me, I will prove it to you," he repeated, not allowing me a chance to speak.

"You say that the women in our society live for other aims than the women in the 'houses of indulgence,' but I say that it is not so, and I will prove it to you. If people differ by their aims, by the internal contents of their lives, then this difference will be shown, also, externally, and externally they will be different. But look at these unhappy, these despised women, and then on the ladies of our highest social circles; the same decorations, the same fashions, the same perfumes, the same bare shoul-

ders, arms, and bosoms, the same extravagant exhibition of the tournure, the same passion for precious stones, for costly, brilliant things, the same gayeties, dances and music and singing. The methods of allurement used by the ones are used by the others.

CHAPTER VII

"YES, and I was captured by these jerseys and locks of hair and tournures.

"And it was very easy to capture me, because I had been brought up in those conditions in which young people, like cucumbers under glass, are turned out in love. You see our too abundant and exciting food, coupled with a perfectly idle existence, is nothing else than a systematic incitement to lust. You may be surprised or not, but it is so. I myself have seen nothing of this sort of thing until recently, but now I have seen it. This is the very thing that troubles me, that no one recognizes this, but every one says stupid things like the woman who just got out.

"Yes; not far from where I live some muzhiks were working this spring on the railway. The ordinary fare of the peasantry is meager, — bread, kvas, onions; the muzhik is lively, healthy, and sound. He goes to work on the railway, and his rations consist of kasha and one pound of meat. But in repayment of this he gives back sixteen hours' work, amounting to thirty puds, carried on a wheelbarrow. And it is always so with him.

"But we who eat daily two pounds of meat and game and fish and all kinds of stimulating foods and drinks — how does that go? In sensual excesses. If it goes that way, the safety-valve is open and all is satisfactory; but cut off the safety-valve, — as I kept it covered temporarily, — and immediately there will be an excitement which, coming through the prism of our artificial life, is expressed in a love of the first water, and is sometimes even platonic. And I fell in love as all young men do.

"And everything followed its course: transports and emotions and poetry. In reality, this love of mine was the result, on the one side, of the activity of the mamasha and the dressmakers; on the other, of the superfluity of stimulating food eaten by me in idleness. Had there not been, on the one hand, excursions in boats, had there not been dressmakers with close-fitting gowns, and the like, and had my wife been dressed in some unbecoming capote, and stayed at home, and had I, on the other hand, been a man in normal conditions, eating only as much food as I needed for my work, and had my safety-valve been open, — but then it chanced to be temporarily closed, — I should not have fallen in love, and there would not have been any trouble.

CHAPTER VIII

"Well, so it went on. My rank and fortune and good clothes and excursions in boats did the business. Twenty times it does not succeed, but this time it succeeded like a trap. I am not jesting. You see, nowadays marriages are always arranged like traps. Do you see how natural it is? The girl has arrived at maturity, and must be married. What could be more simple when the girl is not a monster, and there are men who wish to get married? This is the way it used to be done. The girl has reached the right age; her parents arrange a marriage. Thus it has been done, thus it is done throughout the world; among the Chinese, the Hindus, the Mahometans, and among the common Russian people; thus it is managed among at least ninety-nine per cent of the human race. It is only among a small one per cent, among us libertines and debauchees, that this custom has been found to be bad, and we have invented another. Now, what is this new way? It is this: the girls sit round, and the men come as at a bazaar and take their choice. And the girls wait and wonder, and have their own ideas, but they dare not say: 'Batyushka, take me, — no, me —

not her, but me; look, what shoulders and all the rest.'

"And we, the men, walk by and stare at them and are satisfied. 'I know a thing or two, I am not caught.' They go by, they look, they are satisfied that this is all arranged for their special benefit. 'Look, don't get taken in — here's your chance!'"

"What is to be done, then?" I asked. "You would not have the young women make the offers, would you?"

"Well, I can't exactly say how; only if there is to be equality, then let it be equality. If it is discovered that the system of the go-between[1] is humiliating, still this is a thousand times more so. Then the rights and chances were equal, but in our method the woman is either a slave in a bazaar, or the bait in the trap. You tell any mother or the girl herself the truth, that she is only occupied in husband-catching, — my God, what an insult! But the truth is they do this, and they have nothing else to do. And what is really dreadful is to see poor, and perfectly innocent, young girls engaged in doing this very thing. And again, it would not be so bad if it were only done openly, but it is all deception.

"'Ah, the origin of species, how interesting it is! Ah, Lily is greatly interested in painting.' — And shall you be at the exhibition? How instructive! And the troïka rides and the theater and the symphony. Oh, how remarkable — 'My Lily is crazy over music!' 'And why don't you share these views?' And then the boat rides. And always one thought: — 'Take me, take my Lily. No, me!' 'Just try your luck!' Oh, vileness, oh, falsehood!" he concluded; and, swallowing the last of his tea, proceeded to gather together his cups and utensils.

[1] *Svatovstvo*, whereby in early Russian custom some relative or friend acted as the *svakha*, or match-maker, to arrange the marriage.

CHAPTER IX

"Do you know," he began, while he was packing up his tea and sugar in his bag, "the domination of women, which is the cause of the sufferings of the world, all proceeds from this?"

"How the domination of women?" I asked. "All rights, the majority of rights, belong to men."

"Yes, yes, that is the very thing," he exclaimed, interrupting me. "That is the very thing I wanted to say to you, and that is just what explains the extraordinary phenomenon that on the one side it is perfectly true that woman is reduced to the lowest degree of humiliation; on the other, she is the queen. Just exactly as the Jews, by their pecuniary power, avenge themselves for their humiliation, so it is with women. 'Ah, you want us to be merely merchants; very well, we as merchants will get you under our feet,' say the Jews. 'Ah, you wish us to be merely the objects of sensuality; very well, we as objects of sensual pleasure will make you our slaves,' say the women. A woman's lack of rights does not consist in the fact that she cannot vote or sit as judge, — for rights are not embraced in any such activities, — but in the fact that in sexual intercourse she is not the equal of the man: she must have the right to enjoy the man or to keep him at a distance according to her fancy, she must be able to choose her husband according to her own desire, instead of being the one chosen.

"You say that this would be unbecoming; very good, then let the man cease to have these rights. Now the woman lacks the right which the man possesses. And now, in order to get back this right, she acts on the passions of man; by means of his passions, she subdues him so that, while ostensibly he chooses, she is really the one. And having once got hold of this means, she abuses it, and acquires a terrible power over men."

"Yes, but where is this special power?" I asked.

"Where? Everywhere, in everything. Go in any

large city among the shops. Millions there. You could estimate the amount of human labor expended in them, but in ninety per cent of these shops what will you find intended for men? All the luxury of life is demanded and maintained by women. Reckon up all the factories. The vast proportion of them are manufacturing unprofitable adornments, such as carriages, furniture, trinkets, for women. Millions of men, generations of slaves, perish in the galley-slave work in factories merely for the caprice of women. Women, like tsaritsas, hold as prisoners in slavery and hard labor about ninety per cent of the human race. And all this because they have been kept down, deprived of their equal rights with men. And so they avenge themselves by acting on our passions, by ensnaring us in their nets. Yes, everything comes from that.

"Women have made of themselves such a weapon for attacking the senses of men, that a man cannot with any calmness be in a woman's company. As soon as a man approaches a woman, he falls under the influence of her deviltry, and grows foolish.[1] And there always used to be something awkward and painful, when I saw a lady dressed in a ball-gown; but now it is simply terrible. I regard it as something dangerous for men and contrary to law, and I feel the impulse to call for the police, to summon protection from the peril, to demand that the dangerous object be removed and put out of sight.

"Yes, you are laughing," he cried, "but this is no joke at all. I am convinced that the time is coming and perhaps very soon when men will recognize this and will be amazed that a society could exist in which actions so subversive to social quietude were permitted as those adornments of their body, permitted to women of our circle and meant to appeal to the passions. It is exactly the same as if all kinds of traps should be placed

[1] Literally, "Fall under her *durman*," thorn-apple, stramonium: a word which contains the root *dur*, foolish. The popular question, "*Durmanu chto li tui obyelsa?* — Why have you gormandized on a thorn-apple?" means that you are regarded as crazy. — Tr.

along our promenades and roads — it is worse than that. Why should games of chance be forbidden, and women not be forbidden to dress in a way to appeal to the passions? It is a thousand times more dangerous.

CHAPTER X

"Now, then, you understand me. I was what is called 'in love.' I not only imagined her as absolute perfection, I also imagined myself at the time of my marriage as absolute perfection. You see there is no scoundrel who is not able by searching to find a scoundrel in some respects worse than himself, and who therefore would not find an excuse for pride and self-satisfaction. So it was with me: I was not marrying for money, it was not a question of advantage with me as it was with the majority of my acquaintances, who married either for money or connections: I was rich, she was poor. That is one thing. Another thing which afforded me reason for pride was the fact that, while other men married with the intention of continuing to live in the same polygamy as they had enjoyed up to the time of their marriage, I had firmly resolved to live after my marriage as a monogamist, and my pride had no bounds in consequence of this resolution. Yes, I was a frightful hog, but I imagined that I was an angel!

"The time between my betrothal and my marriage was not very long. But I cannot remember that period of my engagement without shame. How vile it was! You see love is represented as spiritual and not sensual. Well, if it is love, it is spiritual; if it is a spiritual communion, then this spiritual intercourse ought to be expressed in words, in conversations, in colloquies. There was nothing of this. It used to be awfully hard to talk when we were alone together. What a labor of Sisyphus it used to be! No sooner had we thought of something to say and said it, than we would have to be silent and it would be necessary to think of something else. There was nothing to talk about. Everything

that might be said of the life awaiting us, our arrangements, our plans, had been said, and what was there more? You see, if we had been animals then we should have known that it was not expected of us to talk; but here, on the contrary, it was necessary to talk, but there was nothing to say because what really interested us could not be expressed in words.

"And, moreover, there was that abominable custom of eating bonbons, that coarse gluttony, that gormandizing on sweets, and all those vile preparations for marriage; discussions about rooms, apartments, beds, night-gowns, khalats, linen, and toilets. Now you will admit that, if marriages were arranged in accordance with the 'Domostroï,' as that old man said, then the cushions, the dowry, the bed, and all that sort of thing would be merely particulars corresponding with the sacrament. But among us, when out of ten men who go to the altar probably scarcely nine believe, not merely in the sacrament, but do not even believe that what they are doing is anything binding; when out of a hundred men there is scarcely one who has not been practically married before, and out of fifty not more than one who is not ready to deceive his wife on any convenient pretext; when the majority regard the going to the church as merely a special condition for the possession of a certain woman, — think what a terrible significance, in view of all this, all these details must have! It comes to be something in the nature of a sale. They sell the libertine the innocent girl, and they surround the sale with certain formalities.

CHAPTER XI

"THAT is the way all get married, and that is the way I got married, and the much-vaunted honeymoon began. What a vile name that is in itself!" he hissed spitefully. "I was making a tour of all the sights of Paris, and I went in to see the bearded woman and a water-dog. It seemed that the one was only a man *décolleté*, in a

woman's gown, and the other was a dog fastened into a walrus-skin and swimming in a bath-tub full of water. The whole thing was very far from interesting; but when I left the place the showman conducted me out very obsequiously, and, addressing the public collected around the entrance, he pointed to me, and said: —

"'Here, ask this gentleman if it is not worth looking at. Come in, come in, one franc apiece.'

"I was ashamed to say that it was not worth looking at, and the showman evidently counted on that. So is it, undoubtedly, with those that have experienced all the vileness of the honeymoon, and do not dispel the illusions of others. I also refrained from dispelling any one's illusions. But now I do not see why one should not tell the truth. It even seems to me that it is essential to tell the truth about this. It was awkward, shameful, vile, pitiable, and, above all, it was wearisome, unspeakably wearisome. It was something analogous to what I experienced when I was learning to smoke, when I was sick at my stomach and salivated, and I swallowed it down and pretended that it was very pleasant. Just as from that, the delights of marriage, if there are any, will be subsequent; the husband must educate his wife in this vice, in order to procure any pleasure from it."

"Vice? What do you mean?" I asked. "Why, you are talking about one of the most natural of human functions!"

"Natural?" he exclaimed. "Natural? No, I will tell you that I have come to the conviction that it is not natural. Nay, it is perfectly unnatural. Ask children, ask an innocent young girl.

"You said 'natural.'

"It is natural to eat. And it is agreeable, easy, and jolly, and not at all shameful, to eat; but this is vile and shameful and painful. No, it is not natural. And the pure maiden, I am convinced, will always hate it."

"But how," I asked, "how would the human race be perpetuated?"

"Well, why should not the human race perish?" he asked, with a touch of savage irony, as if he were expect-

ing this unfair reply, as if he had heard it before. "Preach abstinence from procreation in the name of making it always possible for English lords to gormandize, and it will go! Preach abstinence from procreation in the name of giving a greater pleasure, it will go! But try to persuade people to refrain from procreation in the name of morality — ye fathers![1] what an outcry! The human race would not be extinguished, because an attempt was made to keep men from being swine. However, excuse me! this light is disagreeable to me; may I shade it?" he asked, pointing to the lamp.

I said that it was immaterial to me, and then — hastily, as in everything he did — he got up on the seat, and pulled down the woolen shade to the lamp.

"Nevertheless," said I, "if all men should adopt this for a law, the human race would be annihilated."

He did not immediately reply.

"You ask: 'How would the human race be perpetuated?'" said he, again taking his seat opposite me, and spreading his legs wide apart, and resting his elbows on his knees. "Why should it be continued — this human race of ours?" he exclaimed.

"Why do you ask such a question? Otherwise there would be no more of us."

"Well, why should there be?"

"What a question — why, to live, of course."

"But why should we live? If here is no other aim, if life was given only to perpetuate life, then there is no reason why we should live. And if this is so, then the Schopenhauers and Hartmanns, and all the Buddhists as well, are perfectly right. Now, if there is a purpose in life, then it is clear that life ought to come to an end when that purpose is attained. This is the logic of it," said he, with evident agitation, and seeming to set a high value on his thought. "This is the logic of it. Observe: if the aim of mankind is happiness, goodness, love if you prefer; if the aim of mankind is what is said in the prophecies that all men are to unite themselves in universal love, that the spears are to be

[1] *Batyushki!*

beaten into pruning-hooks and the like, then what stands in the way of the attainment of this aim? Human passions do! Of all passions, the most powerful and vicious and obstinate is sexual, carnal love; and so if passions are annihilated and with them the last and most powerful, carnal love, then the prophecy will be fulfilled, men will be united together, the aim of mankind will have been attained, and there would be no longer any reason for existence. As long as humanity exists, this ideal will be before it, and of course this is not the ideal of rabbits or of pigs, which is to propagate as rapidly as possible, and it is not the ideal of monkeys or of Parisians, which is to enjoy all the refinements of sexual passion, but it is the ideal of goodness attained by self-restraint and chastity. Toward this men are now striving, and always have striven. And see what results.

"It results that sexual love is the safety-valve. If the human race does not as yet attain this aim, it is simply because there are passions, and the strongest of them the sexual. But since there is sexual passion, a new generation comes along, and of course there is always the possibility that the aim may be attained by some succeeding generation. But as long as it is not attained, then there will be other generations until the aim is attained, until the prophecies are fulfilled, until all men are joined in unity. And then what would be the result?

"If it be granted that God created men for the attainment of a certain end, then He must have created them mortal, without sexual passion, or immortal. If they were mortal, but without sexual passion, then what would be the result? — this: that they would live without attaining their aim, and then would die, so that, to attain the aim, God would have to create new men. But if they were immortal, then let us suppose — although it is harder for those men to correct mistakes and approach perfection than it is for the new generations — let us suppose, I say, that they reached their goal after many thousand years; but then, why should they? What good would the rest of their lives be to them? It is better as it is!....

"But perhaps you do not approve this form of expres-

sion, perhaps you are an evolutionist. Even then it comes to the same thing. The highest genus of animals, men, in order to get the advantage in the conflict with other creatures, must band together, like a hive of bees, and not propagate irregularly; must also, like the bees, nourish the sexless ones; in other words, must struggle toward continence, and never allow the kindling of the carnal lusts to which the whole arrangement of our life is directed."

He paused.

"Will the human race come to an end? Can any one who looks at the world as it is have the slightest doubt of it? Why, it is just as certain as death is certain. We find the end of the world inculcated in all the teachings of the Church, and in all the teachings of Science it is likewise shown to be inevitable.

CHAPTER XII

"In our society it is just exactly reversed: if a man has felt it incumbent on him to be continent during his bachelorhood, then always after he is married he feels it no longer necessary to restrain himself. You see, the wedding journeys, this retirement to solitude which young people with the sanction of their parents practise, are nothing else than a sanction for lewdness. But the moral law when it is broken brings its own punishment.

"In spite of all my endeavors to make my honeymoon a success, it was a failure. The whole time was merely vile, shameful, and tiresome. But very soon it became also painfully oppressive. This state of things began almost at the first. I think it was on the third or fourth day, I found my wife depressed, and I began to inquire what was the matter, began to put my arms around her, which I supposed was all she could possibly desire; but she pushed away my arm and burst into tears.

"What was it? She could not tell me. But she

was depressed and down-hearted. Probably her highly wrought nerves whispered to her the truth as to the ignominy of our relations, but she could not tell me. I began to question her; she said something about being homesick for her mother. It seemed to me that this was not the truth. I tried to console her, but said nothing about her mother. I did not realize that she was simply bored, and that her mother was merely a pretext.

"But she immediately complained because I said nothing about her mother, as if I did not believe her. She told me that she could see I did not love her. I accused her of caprice, and immediately her face changed; in place of melancholy appeared exasperation, and she began in the bitterest terms to charge me with egotism and cruelty.

"I looked at her. Her whole face expressed the utmost coldness and hostility, almost hatred of me. I remember how alarmed I was on seeing this.

"'How is this? What does it mean?' I asked myself; 'love is the union of souls, and instead of this what have we here? Why, it cannot be, this is not she.'

"I did my best to soothe her, but I came up against such an insuperable wall of cold, venomous hostility that, before I had time to think, something like exasperation took possession of me also, and we said to each other a quantity of disagreeable words. The impression of this first quarrel was horrible. I called it a quarrel, but it was not a quarrel; it was really only the discovery of the gulf which was in reality between us. Our passionate love had worn itself out in the satisfaction of the senses, and therefore we remained facing each other as we really were, in other words, two egotists alien to each other, desirous each of getting the greatest possible pleasure out of the other!

"I called what took place between us a quarrel, but it was not a quarrel; it was only the consequence of the cessation of our sensuality, disclosing our actual relation to each other. I did not realize that this cold and hostile relationship was our normal relation. I did not understand this because this hostility, in the first

weeks of our marriage, was very quickly hidden again from us by the rising of a newly distilled sensuality, that is to say, passionate love.

"And so I thought that we had quarreled and become reconciled, and that this would be the end of it. But in the very first month, during our honeymoon, very quickly came another period of satiety, and again we ceased to be necessary to each other, and another quarrel ensued. The second quarrel surprised me even more than the first. I said to myself: —

"'Of course the first could not have been the result of chance, but had to be the result of necessity, and so with this, and there will be others.'

"The second quarrel surprised me the more because it proceeded from the most trivial cause — something pecuniary; but I never grudged money, and certainly could never have grudged any to my wife. I only remember that she made some remark of mine seem to be the expression of my desire to control her through money to which I claimed an exclusive right — something impossible, stupid, cowardly, and natural neither to her nor to me.

"I grew angry, and began to reproach her for her lack of delicacy; she returned the charge, and so it went on as before. And I perceived in her words, and in the expression of her face and her eyes, the same harsh, cold hostility as had surprised me the first time. I remember having quarreled with my brother, my friend, even my father; but never did there arise between us such a peculiar venomous anger as was manifested now. But after a short time our mutual reciprocal hatred concealed itself again under our passionate love, that is, our sensuality, and I once more cherished the notion that these two quarrels had been mistakes which might be rectified.

"But when the third and the fourth quarrel ensued, I came to believe that it was not a mere chance, but that it had to be, and that it would still be so, and I was horror-struck at what was before me. In this connection I was tormented by the horrible idea that I was the only person who had this misfortune, and that no other

couple had any such experiences as I was having with my wife. I had not then found out that this is a common lot — that all men think, just as I did, that it is a misfortune exclusively peculiar to them, and so conceal this exclusive and shameful misfortune, not only from others but also from themselves, and are unwilling to acknowledge it.

"It began with us at the very first and kept on all the time, and grew more severe and more bitter. In the depths of my soul I from the very first felt that I was lost, that marriage had not turned out at all as I had expected, that it was not only not a happiness, but was something very oppressive; but, like all other men, I was not willing to acknowledge this — and I should not acknowledge it even now, had it not been for the sequel — and I concealed it not only from others, but even from myself.

"Now I am amazed that I did not recognize my real position. It might have been seen in the fact that our quarrels sprang from causes so trivial that afterward, when they were ended, it was impossible to remember what brought them about. Reason was not quick enough to sophisticate sufficient pretexts for the hostility that constantly existed between us.

"But still more amazing was the insufficiency of the pretexts for reconciliation. Occasionally it was a word, or an explanation, even tears, but sometimes .... oh, how shameful it is to remember it now! after the bitterest words exchanged, suddenly would come silence, glances, smiles, kisses, embraces! .... Fu! abomination. Why was it that I failed to see all the vileness of this even then?" ....

CHAPTER XIII

Two passengers entered and began to settle themselves at the end of the carriage. He ceased speaking while they were taking their places, but as soon as they became quiet he went on with his story, never for an instant losing the thread of his thoughts.

"What is chiefly vile about this," he went on to say, "is that it is taken for granted in theory that love is something ideal and elevated; whereas, in practice, love is something low and swinish, which it is shameful and disgusting to speak of or remember. You see, it was not without reason that nature made it shameful and disgusting. But if it is shameful and disgusting, then it ought to be so much the more to be made known. But with us, on the contrary, people pretend that what is low and shameful and disgusting is beautiful and elevated.

"What were the first symptoms of my love? Why, these — that I gave myself up to animal excesses, not only not feeling any shame at it, but feeling a certain pride at the possibility of these animal excesses, not thinking either of her spiritual life or even of her physical life. I wondered what was the cause of our animosity to each other, but the thing was perfectly clear: this animosity was nothing else than the protest of human nature against the animal which was crushing it. I was amazed at our hatred of each other. But you see it could not have been otherwise. This hatred was nothing else than identical with the hatred felt by the accomplices in a crime, both for the instigation and for the accomplishment of the deed. What else was it than a crime, when she, poor thing, became pregnant within the first month and our swinish relations continued.

"You think that I am wandering from my story? Not at all. I am all the time relating to you *how* I killed my wife. .... At my trial I was asked why and how I killed her. .... Fools! they think that I killed her with a dagger on the seventeenth of October. I did not kill her then, but long before. In exactly the same way they are all killing their wives now, all, all." ....

"How so?" I asked.

"It is something amazing that no one wishes to know what is so clear and evident — what doctors ought to know and to proclaim, but they hold their tongues. You see, it is really awfully simple! Men and women are like animals, and they are so created that after sexual

union pregnancy begins, then suckling — a condition of things during which sexual union is dangerous both for the woman and for the child. The number of women and of men is about even: what does that signify? Of course it is clear. It does not require great wisdom to draw from these things the conclusion which animals also draw — that continence is necessary. But no! Science has gone so far as to discover certain corpuscles which run about in the blood, and all sorts of useless stupidities, but it cannot comprehend this yet. At least it is not rumored about that Science is saying this.

"And now for women there are only two methods of escape: one is by making monsters of themselves, by destroying or annihilating in themselves, according to the requirements of the case, the faculty of being women, that is to say, mothers, so that men may have no interruption of their enjoyment. The second escape is not an escape at all, but a simple, brutal, direct violation of the laws of nature. Such is constantly taking place in all so-called virtuous families, and it is this: the woman, in direct opposition to her nature, is obliged while bearing and nursing a child to be at the same time her husband's mistress, is obliged to be what no other animal ever permits. And she can't have the strength for it.

"Hence in our social sphere hysteria and nerves, and among the people women possessed. You have observed among girls, pure girls I mean, there is no such thing as 'possession'; it is only among peasant women and among women who live with their husbands. So it is with us. And it is exactly the same in Europe. All the hospitals are full of hysterical women, who have broken the laws of nature. And these possessed women and the patients of Charcot are perfect cripples, and the world is full of half-crippled women. Only to think, what a mighty thing is taking place in a woman when she has conceived, or when she is nursing a baby. That which is growing is to continue ourselves, is to take our place. And this holy function is violated — for what? It is terrible to think about it. And yet they talk about

the freedom, the rights, of women! It is just the same as if cannibals should feed up their prisoners for food, and at the same time talk, assert, that they were working for their freedom and rights."

All this was new, and surprised me.

"But what would you do?" I exclaimed. "If this came about, then a husband could have intercourse with his wife only once in two years; but a man ...."

"Yes, yes, a man must have it," said he, taking the words out of my mouth. "Again, the priests of Science support you in your views. Suggest to a man that vodka, tobacco, opium, are indispensable to him, and all that sort of thing will become indispensable to him. It means that God did not understand what was needful, and that therefore, as He did not ask advice of the magi, he arranged things badly. Pray observe, the thing does not hang together. It is needful, it is indispensable, for a man to satisfy his carnal desires — so they decide; but here comes in the question of conception and nursing babies, which prevents the satisfaction of this necessity. How is the difficulty to be overcome? How manage it? Why! go to the magi; they will arrange it. They have thought it all out. Oh! when shall these magi be dethroned from their deceptions? It is time! You see how far things have already gone; men become mad and shoot themselves, and all from this one cause. And how could it be otherwise? Animals seem to know that their progeny perpetuate their kind, and they observe a certain law in this respect. Only man has not the wisdom to know this, and does not wish to know it. All he cares for is to have the greatest possible pleasure. And who is he? he is the tsar of nature, he is man!

"Pray observe, animals enjoy intercourse only when there is to be progeny, but the vile tsar of nature does it only for pleasure's sake, and at any time; and, moreover, he idealizes this monkey-like business, and calls it the pearl of creation, love! And in the name of this love, that is to say, this vileness, he destroys — what? one-half of the human race! In the name of his grati-

fications he makes of all women, who ought to be his coadjutors in the progress of humanity toward truth and happiness, enemies instead! Look around and tell me who everywhere acts as a hindrance to the progress of humanity — women. And what makes them so? Nothing but this!

"Yes, yes," he repeated several times, and he began to shift his position, to get out his cigarettes and to smoke, evidently desiring to calm himself a little.

CHAPTER XIV

"Thus I lived like a pig," he continued, in his former tone. "The worst of it was that, while I was living this vile life, I imagined that because I did not commit adultery with other women, therefore I was leading a perfectly virtuous family life, that I was a moral man, that I was in no manner to blame, but that if we had our quarrels she was to blame — her character!

"She was not to blame, of course. She was like all other women, like the majority. She had been educated in the way demanded by the position of women in our circle, and therefore as all women, without exception, belonging to the leisurely classes are educated and as they have to be educated.

"They talk nowadays about some new-fangled method of female education. All idle words: the training of women is exactly what it must be in view of the existent, sincere, and genuine notion of women universally held.

"And the education of women will always correspond to the notion of her held by men. Now we all know what that is, how men look on women: *Wein, Weib, und Gesang*, and so it goes in the verses of the poets. Take all poetry, all painting, all sculpture, beginning with erotic verse and naked Venuses and Phrynes, and you will see that woman is an instrument of pleasure; such she is at Truba and at Grachevka and at the finest ball. And mark the devil's subtlety:

pleasure, satisfaction .... then let it be understood that it is merely pleasure, that woman is a sweet morsel. In the early days, knights boasted that they made divinities of women — apotheosized them, and at the same time they looked on them as the instruments of their pleasure. But nowadays men declare that they respect women, some relinquish their places to them, or pick up their handkerchiefs, others admit their rights to occupy all responsibilities, to take part in government and the like. They do all this, but their view of them is always the same, she is still the instrument of enjoyment, her body is the means of enjoyment. And she knows all that. It is just the same as slavery.

"Slavery is nothing else than the enjoyment by the few of the compulsory labor of the many. And in order that slavery may come to an end, people must cease desiring to take advantage of the compulsory labor of others, must consider it sinful or shameful. But while they take away, while they abolish, the external form of slavery, while they so arrange it that it is no longer possible to buy and sell slaves in the market, and they believe and persuade themselves that slavery is abolished, they do not see and they do not wish to see that slavery still exists, for the reason that people, just the same as ever, like to profit by the labors of others, and consider it fair and honorable to do so. And as long as they consider this to be fair, there will always be men who will be stronger and keener than others, and will be able to do so.

"So it is with the emancipation of women. The slavery of woman consists in precisely this, that men desire to take advantage of her as an instrument of enjoyment, and consider it right to do so.

"Well, and now they emancipate woman, they give her all rights the same as to men, but they still continue to look on her as an instrument of enjoyment, and so they educate her with this end in view, both in childhood and by public opinion. But all the time she is just the same kind of a dissolute slave as before, and her husband is just the same kind of a dissolute slave-owner.

"They emancipate women in the colleges and in the law courts, but they look on her still as an object of enjoyment. Train her as she is trained among us, to regard herself in this light, and she will always remain a lower creature. Either she will, with the assistance of villainous doctors, prevent the birth of her offspring, — in other words, she will be a kind of prostitute, degrading herself, not to the level of a beast, but to the level of a thing; or she will be what she is, in the majority of cases, heart-sick, hysterical, unhappy, without the possibility of spiritual development.

"Gymnasia and universities cannot change this. It can be changed only by a change in the way men regard women, and the way women regard themselves. It can be changed only by woman coming to regard virginity as the highest condition, and not as it is now regarded, as a reproach and disgrace. Until this comes about, the ideal of every girl, whatever her education, will still remain that of attracting to herself as many men as possible, as many males as she can, in order that she may have a possibility of choice.

"The fact that one girl understands mathematics, and another can play on the harp, does not change this in the least. A woman is fortunate and attains all that she can desire when she obtains a husband, and therefore the chief task of woman is to learn how to bewitch him. So it has been, and so it will be. Just as this was characteristic of the maiden's life in our circle, so it continues to be even after she is married. In the maiden's life this was necessary for a choice; in the married woman's life it is needed for her ascendancy over her husband.

"The only thing which destroys this — curtails it for the time being — is the birth of children, and this is when she is not a monster; in other words, when she nurses her children. But here again the doctors interfere. In the case of my wife, although she wanted to suckle her first baby, and though she suckled the next five, the state of her health seemed precarious, and these doctors, who cynically undressed her and felt of

her all over, — for which service I was obliged to be grateful to them and to pay money, — these gentle doctors found that she ought not to nurse her child; and so she, this first time, was deprived of the sole means of saving herself from coquetry. She hired a wet-nurse; in other words, we took advantage of the poverty, needs, ignorance of another woman, decoyed her away from her own child to ours, and, in payment for this, gave her a head-dress with laces. But that is not the point. The point is that during this period of emancipation from bearing and nursing babies, the female coquetry, which had hitherto lain dormant, manifested itself in her with greater strength, while correspondingly in me there appeared with especial violence the pangs of jealousy, which unceasingly tore me during all my married life, as they cannot fail to tear all husbands who live with their wives as I lived with mine — that is to say, unnaturally.

CHAPTER XV

"During the whole course of my married life I never ceased to experience the pangs of jealousy, but there were periods when I suffered from them with especial acuteness; and one of these periods was after the birth of my first child, when the doctors forbade her to suckle it. I was especially jealous at this time; in the first place, because my wife suffered from that uneasiness characteristic of mothers, which is calculated to make an unreasonable interruption of the regular course of life; secondly, because when I saw how easily she renounced the moral responsibilities of a mother I naturally, even though unconsciously, concluded that it would be equally easy for her to renounce the duties of a wife; the more so because she was perfectly healthy, and, notwithstanding the prohibition of the dear doctors, she nursed the other children, and nursed them excellently."

"But you don't seem to like doctors?" said I, for I

had noticed a particularly bitter tone in his voice every time he mentioned them.

"This is not a matter of love or of hate. They ruined my life, as they have ruined, and will still continue to ruin, the lives of thousands, hundreds of thousands, of people; and I cannot help connecting cause and effect. I understand that they, like lawyers and others, must earn money to live on, and I would willingly give them a half of my income; and, if it were only realized what they were doing, every one else would also, I am convinced, give a half of his property on condition that they would not meddle with our family lives, and would never come near us. I have never collected any statistics, still I know of a dozen cases — a multitude of them — in which they have killed the unborn child, declaring that the mother would not live if the child were born; and yet afterward the mother was admirably fortunate in childbearing; and again they have killed the mother under the pretext of some operation or other. You see, no one reckons up these murders, just as no one ever reckoned the murders of the Inquisition, because it has been supposed that this was done for the benefit of humanity. It is impossible to count the crimes committed by them. But all these crimes are nothing compared to the moral corruption of materialism which they introduced into the world, especially through women.

"I say nothing about the fact that, if we should follow their prescription, then, thanks to the infection everywhere, in everything, people would have to separate instead of drawing closer together; they would have, according to the teachings of the doctors, to sit apart, and never let the atomizer, with carbolic acid, out of their mouths..... Lately, however, they have discovered that even this is of no special use.

"But this is not to the point. The principal poison lies in the demoralization of the people, women especially.

"To-day, it is no longer enough to say, 'You are living a bad life; live better.' You can't say that to yourself or to another man. But if you are living a bad life, then the cause for it lies in the abnormal state of the ner-

vous functions, and the like. And you have to consult the doctors, and they prescribe for thirty-five kopeks' worth of medicine at the apothecaries, and you take it.

"You will grow even worse, then have to take new drugs and consult other doctors. An excellent dodge!

"But that is not to the point. I only say that she suckled the children admirably, and that the only thing that saved me from the pangs of jealousy was her bearing and nursing her children.

"If it had not been for that, the inevitable end would have come about earlier.

"The children saved me and her. During eight years she gave birth to five children, and all except the first she nursed herself."

"Where are your children now?" I asked.

"My children?" he repeated, with a startled look.

"Forgive me! perhaps this question caused you painful memories."

"No, it 's of no consequence. My sister-in-law and her brother took charge of my children. They would not give them to me. You see I am a kind of insane man. I am going away from them now. I have seen them, but they won't give them to me. For if they did, I should educate them so that they should not be like their parents. But it is necessary that they should be the same. Well, what is to be done? I can understand why they should not give them to me, or trust me. And besides, I don't know as I should have the strength to bring them up. I think not. I am a ruin, a cripple! One thing I have.... I know. Yes, it is manifest that I know what it will be a long time before the rest of the world know.

"Yes, my children are alive, and are growing up to be just such savages as all the rest around them are. I have seen them — three times I have seen them. I can't do anything for them — not a thing. I am going now to my own place in the south; I have a little house and a little garden there.

"Yes, it will not be soon that people will know what I know. It will soon be easy to find out how much iron

and what other metals there are in the sun and the stars; but what shall cure our swinishness, that is hard, awfully hard!

"You have listened to me, and even for that I am grateful.

CHAPTER XVI

"You just mentioned the children. There, again, what terrible lying goes on concerning children. Children are a divine benediction. Children are a delight. Now this is all a lie. All this used to be so, but now there is nothing of the sort, nothing at all. Children are a torment, and that is all. The majority of mothers feel so, and some of them do not hesitate to say so, up and down. Ask the greater number of the mothers of our circle, — people of means, — and they will tell you that from terror lest their children should sicken and die they do not wish to have children; if they are born, they do not wish to suckle them, lest they should grow too much attached to them and cause them sorrow. The delight which the child affords them by its beauty, its tiny little arms, its little feet, its whole body, — the satisfaction afforded is less than the agony of apprehension which they experience, I do not say from illness or the loss of the child, but from the mere apprehension of the possibility of illnesses and death. Having weighed the advantages and disadvantages, it seems to be disadvantageous, and therefore that it is not desirable, to have children. They say this openly, boldly, imagining that these sentiments grow out of their love to their children, good, praiseworthy feelings in which they take pride. They do not notice this: that by this reasoning they directly renounce love and assert their egoism. For them there is less pleasure from the charm of a child than suffering from apprehension for it, and therefore they don't desire a child which they would come to love. They do not sacrifice themselves for the beloved creature, but they sacrifice for themselves the beloved creature that is to be.

"It is clear that this is not love, but egoism. But it is not for me to criticize these mothers of well-to-do families for their egoism, when you think of all they endure from the health of their children in our modern fashionable life, thanks again to these same doctors. How well I remember even now our life and the conditions of our life during the first period of our marriage, when we had three or four young children, and she was absorbed with them! It fills me even now with horror.

"It was no kind of a life. It was a perpetual peril, rescue from it followed by new peril; then new and desperate endeavors, and then a new rescue — all the time as if we were on board a sinking ship. It sometimes seemed to me that this was done on purpose; that she was pretending to be troubled about her children so as to get the upper hand of me, so alluringly, so simply all questions were decided for her advantage. It seemed to me sometimes that all that she said and did in these circumstances was done on purpose. But no, she herself suffered terribly and kept tormenting herself about the children, and about the care of their health and about their illnesses. It was a torture for her and for me also. And it was impossible for her not to torment herself.

"You see her attachment to her children, — the animal instinct to nurse them, to fondle them, to protect them was in her as it is in the majority of women; but she had not what animals have — a freedom from imagination and reason. The hen has no fear of what may befall her chick, she knows nothing about the diseases which may come upon it, knows nothing of all those remedies which men imagine they can employ to keep away sickness and death. And for the hen the young ones are no torment. She does for her chicks what is natural and pleasant for her to do, and her young are a delight to her. When the chicken shows signs of sickness her duties are distinctly determined: she warms and nourishes it. And in doing this she knows that she is doing her duty. If the chicken dies, she does not ask herself why it died, where it has gone to, she cackles for a while, then stops and goes on living as before.

"But for our unhappy women and for my wife there was nothing of the kind. Then, besides the question of diseases and how to cure them, of how to educate them, how to develop them, she had heard from all sides and had read endlessly varied and contradictory rules: you must feed it this way, no not this way, but so; how to dress it, what to give it to drink, when to bathe it, when to put it to sleep, when to take it out to walk, ventilation, — in regard to all this, we — and she especially — learned new rules every week. Just as if children began to be born only yesterday! Why! some child was not fed quite properly, or was n't bathed at the right time, and it fell ill, and it showed that we were to blame — that we had not done what we should have done. Even when children are well, they are a torment. But when they fall ill, why then, of course, it is a perfect hell. It is presupposed that sickness may be cured and that there is such a science and there are such men — doctors, and that they know. Not that all know, but that the best of them do. And here is a sick child and it is requisite to get hold of this man, the very best of his profession, who can cure, and the child is saved; and if you don't get hold of this doctor, or if you don't live where this doctor lives, then the child is lost. And this belief was not exclusively confined to my wife, but it is the belief of all the women of her sphere, and on all sides she hears such talk as this:—

"'Two of Yekaterina Semyonovna's children died because they did not call Ivan Zakharuitch in time, but Ivan Zakharuitch saved the life of Marya Ivanovna's oldest daughter; and here the Petrovitch children were sent in time to different hotels by this doctor's advice, and so their lives were saved; but those that had not been isolated, died. And such and such a woman had a feeble child, and by the doctor's advice they took it South, and it lived. ....'

"How can one fail to torment oneself and grow excited all one's life long, when the life of her children, to whom she is devotedly attached, depends on her knowing in time what Ivan Zakharuitch will say about it?

But no one knows what Ivan Zakharuitch will say — least of all himself, because he knows very well that he knows nothing at all and cannot give any help, and he only tergiversates at haphazard merely in order that people may not cease to believe in his knowledge.

"You see, if she had been simply an animal, she would not have tormented herself so; while if she had been a normal human being, then she would have had faith in God, she would have thought and spoken as true believers say: —

"'God gave and God has taken and one can't escape from God.'

"So our whole life with our children was no joy but a torment for her, and, therefore, for me also. How could we help tormenting ourselves? And she constantly did torment herself. It used to be that just as we were calming down from any scene of jealousy or a simple quarrel, and were planning to begin a new life, to read something and to do something, and had only got fairly started, word would suddenly be brought that Vasya was vomiting, that Masha had the dysentery, or that Andryusha had a rash — and the end of it was that we had no kind of a life. Where should we send, what doctor should we get, in which room should we isolate the patient? And then began klysters, the taking of temperatures, the medicines, and the doctors. And this would scarcely be done with before something else would begin. There was no regular family life. But, as I have told you, there was a constant apprehension from real or fancied dangers. And that is the way it is in most families. In my family it was especially pronounced. My wife was affectionate and superstitious.

"Thus it was that the presence of children not only did not improve our life, but poisoned it. Moreover, the children gave us a new pretext for quarreling. From the time we began to have children, and the more in proportion as they grew up, the more frequently our children became the very means and object of our quarrels, not only the subject, but the very instrument

of dissension; we, as it were, fought each other with our own children as weapons. Each of us had his own favorite child as a weapon of attack. I made more use of Vasya the eldest, and she of Liza. Later, when the children had begun to grow up, and their characters formed, it came about that they took sides with us according as we were able to attract them. They suffered terribly from this state of affairs, poor little things, but we in our incessant warfare had no time to think of them. The little girl was my special ally; the oldest boy, who resembled his mother and was her favorite, often seemed hateful to me.

CHAPTER XVII

"Well, thus we lived. Our relations grew more and more hostile, and at last it went so far that difference of views no longer produced enmity, but that enmity produced difference of views. Whatever she said I was ready in advance to disagree with her, and so it was with her.

"In the fourth year it was fairly admitted by both of us, though tacitly, that we could not understand each other — that we could not agree. We ceased to make any attempt to talk anything over to the end. In regard to the simplest things, especially the children, we each kept our own opinion unchangeably. As I now remember, the opinions which I advocated were not so precious in my sight that I could not give them up; but she had opposing notions, and to yield to them meant to yield to her. And this I could not do. Nor could she yield to me. She evidently counted herself always perfectly right toward me, and as for me, I was always a saint in my own eyes compared to her. When we were together we were almost reduced to silence, or to such conversations as I am convinced the beasts may carry on together: — 'What time is it?' — 'Is it bedtime?' — 'What will you have for dinner to-day?' — 'Where will you

drive?'—'What is the news?'—'We must send for the doctor; Masha has a sore throat.'

"It required only to step a hair's width beyond this unendurably narrowing circle of conventional sentences in order to inspire a dissension,—skirmishes and expressions of hatred regarding the coffee, the table-cloth, the drive, the course of the game at whist,—in fact, over trifles which could not have had the slightest importance for either of us. In me, at least, hatred of her boiled terribly. I often looked at her when she was drinking tea, waving her foot, or conveying her spoon to her mouth, sipping from it and swallowing the liquid, and I hated her for this very trifle as if it were the worst of crimes. I did not notice that these periods broke out in me with perfect regularity and uniformity, corresponding to the periods of what we called 'love.' A period of 'love'—then a period of hatred; an energetic period of passion, then a long period of hatred; a feebler manifestation of passion, then a briefer outbreak of hatred.

"We did not then comprehend that this love and hatred were one and the same animal passion, only with opposite poles. It would have been horrible to live in this way if we had realized our situation; but we did not realize it and did not see it. In this lie the salvation as well as the punishment of a man is that when he is living irregularly he may blind himself so as not to see the wretchedness of his situation.

"Thus it was with us. She endeavored to forget herself in strenuous and ever absorbing occupations,—her housekeeping, the arrangement of the furniture, dressing herself and the family, and the education and health of the children. I had my own affairs to attend to,—drinking, hunting, playing cards, going to my office. We were both busy all the time. We both felt that the busier we were the more annoyed we might be with each other.

"'It is very well for you to make up such grimaces,' I would think, mentally addressing her. 'How you tormented me all night with your scenes. But I have a meeting to attend.'

"'It is all very well for you,' she would not only think, but even say aloud, 'but the baby kept me awake all night long.'

"These new theories of hypnotism, mental diseases, hysteria, are all an absurdity — not a simple absurdity, but a vile and pernicious one. In regard to my wife, Charcot would have infallibly said that she was a victim of hysteria, and he would have said of me that I was abnormal, and probably he would have tried to cure us. But there was no disease to cure.

"Thus we lived in a continual mist, not cognizant of the situation in which we found ourselves. And if the catastrophy which overtook us had not occurred, I should have continued to live on till old age in the same way, and on my death-bed I should have even thought that I had lived a good life, — not remarkably good, but not at all a bad life, — like that of all other men. I should never have understood that abyss of unhappiness and that abominable falsehood in which I was floundering.

"We were like two convicts, fastened to one chain and hating each other, each poisoning the life of the other and striving not to recognize the fact. I did not then realize that ninety-nine per cent of married people live in the same hell as mine, and that it must infallibly be so. I did not then realize that it was true of others or true of myself.

"It is amazing what coincidences may be found in a regular and even in an irregular life. Thus when parents are beginning to find that they are making each other's lives unendurable, it becomes imperative that they go to the city for the better education of their children. And so it was we found it necessary to move to the city."

He stopped speaking, and twice gave vent to those strange sounds which this time were quite like repressed sobs. We were approaching a station.

"What time is it?" he asked.

I looked at my watch. It was two o'clock.

"Are n't you tired?" he asked.

"No; but are you not tired?"

"I am suffocating. Permit me, I will go out and get a drink of water."

And he got up and went staggering through the carriage.

I sat alone, cogitating over what he had told me, and I fell into such a brown study that I did not notice him when he returned through the other door.

CHAPTER XVIII

"Yes, I all the time wander from my story," he began; "I have pondered over it a good deal. I look on many things in a different way from what most do, and I want to talk it all out.

"Well, we began to live in the city. There a man may live a century and never dream that he has long ago died and rotted. One has no time to study himself — his time is wholly occupied: business, social relations, his health, art, the health of his children, and their education. Now he must receive calls from such and such people and must return them; now he must see this woman and hear some famous man or woman talk. You see, at any given moment there will be in the city surely one celebrity, and generally several, whom it is impossible for you to miss. Now you have to consult a doctor for yourself or for this one or that, then you have to see one of the tutors or the governess, and life is frittered away. Well, so it was we lived and suffered less from our life together. Moreover, we had at first the charming occupation of getting settled in a new city, in new quarters, and then again in traveling back and forth between the city and the country.

"Thus we lived one winter, and during the second winter the circumstance which I am going to relate took place, and though it seemed a trifling thing and attracted no attention, still it brought about all that succeeded.

"She became delicate in health, and the doctors for-

bade her to have any more children, and they taught her how to prevent it. This was repulsive to me. I had no patience with such an idea, but she with frivolous obstinacy insisted on having her own way, and I had to yield. The last justification of the swinish life — children — was taken away, and our life became viler than ever.

"To the muzhik, to the laboring man, children are a necessity; although it is hard for him to feed them, still he must have them and there the marital relations are justified. But to us, who already have children, more children are not a desideratum; they cause extra work, expense, further division of property — they are a burden.

"And therefore there is no justification for us of the swinish life. Either we artificially prevent the birth of children or we regard children as a misfortune, — as the consequence of carelessness, which is worse.

"There is no justification. But we have fallen morally so low that we do not see the need of any justification. The majority of men now belonging to the cultivated classes give themselves up to this form of debauchery without the slightest twinge of conscience.

"No one feels any conscientious scruples, because conscience is a non-existent quality except — if we may so say — the conscience of public opinion and of the criminal law. And in this respect neither the one nor the other is violated; no one has to bear the brunt of public scorn, for all do the same thing: both Marya Pavlovna and Ivan Zakharuitch. Why breed beggars or deprive oneself of the possibility of social life?.... or is there any reason to stand in awe of the criminal law or to fear it. Ugly peasant girls and soldiers' wives may throw their babies into ponds and wells, and they of course must go to prison, but all that sort of thing is done by us opportunely and neatly!

"Thus we lived two years. The means employed by the rascally doctors evidently began to take effect: physically she improved and she grew more beautiful, like the last beauty of the summer. She was conscious

of this, and began to take care of herself. Her beauty became fascinating and disturbing to men. As she was in the prime of a woman of thirty and was no longer bearing children, she grew plump — stirring the passions. Even the sight of her made one uneasy. When she came among men she attracted all eyes. She was like a well-fed and bridled horse which had not been driven for some time and from which the bridle was taken off. There was no longer any restraint, as with ninety-nine per cent of our women. Even I felt this, and it was terrible to me."

CHAPTER XIX

He suddenly got up and sat down close by the window.

"Excuse me," he exclaimed, and looking out intently sat there for as much as three minutes. Then he sighed deeply and again sat down opposite me. His face had undergone a complete change, there came a piteous look into his eyes, and a strange sort of smile curved his lips.

"I had grown a little tired, but I will go on with my story. There is plenty of time left; it has not begun to grow light yet. Yes," he began again, after he had lighted a cigarette. "She grew plumper after she ceased to bear children, and her malady — the constant worriment over the children — began to disappear; it did not really disappear, but she, as it were, awoke from a drunken stupor; she began to remember, and she saw that there was a whole world, a divine world, with its joys about which she had entirely forgotten, but in which she did not know how to live — a divine world which she did not understand at all.

"'How keep it from being wasted. Time is fleeting — it will not return.'

"Thus I imagined she thought or rather felt, and indeed it would have been impossible for it to be other-

wise; she had been educated to believe that in this world there is only one thing worthy of any one's attention — love. She had become married, she had got some notion of what this love was, but it was very far from being what had been promised, from what she expected; she had undergone the loss of many illusions; she had borne many sufferings, and then that unexpected torment — so many children! This agony had worn her out. And now, thanks to the obliging doctors, she had found out that it was possible to avoid having children. She was glad of that, made the experiment, and began to live for the one thing which she knew about — for the sake of love. But the enjoyment of love with a husband who was consumed with the fiery passions of wrath and jealousy was not the kind she wanted. She began to picture to herself another, a more genuine, a newer kind of connection — at least that is what I imagine was the case. And so she began to look around, as if she were expecting something.

"I noticed it, and was correspondingly troubled. It kept all the time happening that she, talking as her habit was with me through the medium of others, that is to say, talking with strangers, but making her remarks for my ears, expressed herself boldly, never at all dreaming that she, an hour before, had said diametrically the opposite, and expressed herself half seriously to the effect that that maternal solicitude was a delusion, that there was no sense in sacrificing her life for her children, that she was still young and could still enjoy life. She really occupied herself less with her children, certainly with less of desperate solicitude; but she gave more and more attention to herself, occupied herself with her external appearance, although she tried to keep it secret; also with her pleasures and with her accomplishments. She once more enthusiastically took up her piano practice which hitherto she had entirely neglected. That was the beginning of the end."

He once more turned to the window his weary-looking eyes, but straightway, evidently making an effort to control himself, he proceeded: —

"Yes, that man appeared."

He hesitated, and twice produced through his nose his peculiar sounds. I saw that it was trying for him to mention that man, to recall him, even to allude to him. But he made an effort, and as it were breaking through the barrier which hindered him, he resolutely went on: —

"A vile fellow he was in my eyes, in my estimation. And not because he played an important part in my life, but because he was really vile. However, the fact that he was bad serves merely as a proof of how irresponsible she was. If it had not been he, it would have surely been some one else."

He again ceased speaking.

"Yes, he was a musician, a fiddler — not a professional musician, but half professional, half society man. His father was a landed proprietor, a neighbor of my father's. His father went to ruin, and his children — three of them were boys — all managed to make their way; only this one, the youngest, was intrusted to his godmother and sent to Paris. There he was sent to the Conservatoire, because he had a talent for music, and he was graduated as a fiddler and played in concerts. He was the man." ....

It was evident that he wished to say something harsh about him, but he restrained himself, and said, speaking rapidly: —

"Well, I don't know how he had lived up to that time, but that year he appeared in Russia and came to my house. .... He had almond-shaped, humid eyes, handsome, smiling lips, little waxed mustaches, the latest and most fashionable method of dressing his hair, an insipidly handsome face, such as women call 'not bad,' a slender build, though not ill-shaped, and with a largely developed behind such as they say characterize Hottentot women. This it is said is musical! Slipping into familiarity, as far as was permitted him, but sensitive and always ready to stop short at the slightest resistance, with a regard to external appearances, and with that peculiar touch of Parisian elegance, caused by buttoned boots and bright-colored neckties and everything

else which foreigners acquire in Paris, and which by their character of novelty always attract women. In his manners there was a factitious external gayety. A way, as you may know, of speaking about everything by means of hints and fragmentary allusions, as if the person with whom he was speaking knew all about it, and could fill out the missing links.

"Well, then, this man with his music was the cause of all the trouble. You see at the trial the whole affair was represented as having been caused by my jealousy. This was not so at all, that is to say, it was not exactly so; it was, and it was not. At the trial it was decided that I had been deceived and that I had committed the murder in defending my outraged honor, — so they called it in their language, — and on this ground I was acquitted. At the trial I did my best to explain my idea of it, but they understood that I had wished to rehabilitate my wife's honor.

"Her relations with that musician, whatever they were, did not have in my eyes that significance, nor in hers either. It simply had the significance I have already mentioned, that of my swinishness. All came from the fact that between us existed that terrible gulf, of which I have told you, that terrible tension of mutual hatred, whereby the first impulse was sufficient to precipitate the crisis. The quarrels between us, as time went on, became something awful and were remarkably striking, being mingled with intense animal passion.

"If he had not appeared, surely some one else would. If there had not been one pretext for jealousy, there would have been another. I insist upon it that all husbands living as I lived must either live wanton lives, or separate, or kill themselves or their wives as I did. If this does not occur in any given case, it is a rare exception. Why, before the end came, as I made it come, I was several times on the brink of suicide, and even she poisoned herself.

CHAPTER XX

"YES, this happened not long before the crisis.

"We had been living in a sort of armistice, and there was no reason for it to be broken. Suddenly a conversation began, in which I remarked that a certain dog had received a medal at an exhibition. She said: —

"'Not a medal, but honorable mention.'

"A dispute began. We began to reproach each other, skipping from subject to subject.

"'Well, I knew that long ago; it was always so.'

"'You said so and so.'

"'No, I said thus and so.'

"'Do you mean to say I lie?'

"There is a feeling that you are on the edge of a frightful quarrel, and that you will be tempted to kill yourself or her. You know that it will begin in an instant and you dread it like fire and you want to control yourself, but anger seizes on your whole being. She is in the same or in an even worse condition, and she deliberately puts a wrong construction on every word you say, giving it a false signification, and every word she speaks is steeped in poison; wherever she knows I am most sensitive, there she strikes. The farther it goes, the more portentous it grows. I cry: —

"'Silence,' or the like.

"She rushes from the room and takes refuge in the nursery. I try to detain her so that I may say out my say and prove my position, and I seize her by the arm. She pretends that I hurt her and screams: —

"'Children, your father is striking me.'

"I cry: —

"'Don't you lie!'

"'And this is not the first time either,' she cries, or something to that effect.

"The children rush to her. She tries to calm them. I say, —

"'Don't pretend.'

"She says: —

"'For you everything is pretense. You strike a woman and then say that she is pretending. Now I understand you. This is the very thing you want.'

"I shout: —

"'Oh, if you were only dead!'[1]

"I remember how horror-struck I was at those terrible words. I would never have believed myself capable of uttering such coarse, terrible words, and I am amazed that they leap forth from my mouth. I shout out those terrible words and rush into my library, sit down and smoke. I hear her go into the vestibule, preparing to go out. I ask: —

"'Where are you going?'

"She makes no reply.

"'Well, the devil go with her!' I say to myself, as I return to the library and again sit down and smoke. A thousand different plans of how to avenge myself on her and how to get rid of her, how to set everything to rights again and how to act as if nothing had taken place, go rushing through my brain.

"And as I sit and think, I smoke, smoke, smoke! I conceive the plan of running away from her, of hiding myself, of going to America. I actually go as far as to dream of getting rid of her, and I think how delightful it would be as soon as this is accomplished to make new ties with some beautiful woman, entirely new. I dream of getting rid of her by her dying or by securing a divorce, and I cogitate how this may be brought about. I see that my mind is wandering, that I am not thinking consecutively; but in order that I may not see that I am thinking the wrong kind of thoughts and am entirely at sea, I smoke.

"But life at home goes on. The governess comes and asks: —

"'Where is madame? when will she be back?'

"The lackey asks: —

"'Shall I serve tea?'

"I go into the dining-room. The children, especially the oldest one, Liza, who is already old enough to under-

[1] *Izdokhla*, dead; a word applied to beasts.

stand, look at me questioningly, disapprovingly. We silently drink our tea. Of her there is no sign. The whole evening passes; she does not come, and two thoughts mingle in my soul: wrath against her because she is tormenting me and all the children by her absence, — and yet, she will return in the end, — and fear that she will not come back, but will lay violent hands on herself.

"I should go out in search of her. But where to find her? At her sister's? But it would be stupid to go there with such an inquiry. Well, then, God go with her! if she wants to torment us, let her torment herself also. That is the very thing she would like. And next time she will be worse.

"But supposing she is not at her sister's, but has done something else — has even already laid hands on herself?

"Eleven o'clock, twelve o'clock..... I will not go into the sleeping-room — it would be stupid to lie down there and wait alone, but I will lie down where I am. I try to occupy myself with some work, to write letters, to read; but I can't do anything. I sit alone in my library, I torment myself with apprehensions, I am full of anger, I listen. Three o'clock, four — no sign of her. I fall asleep just before morning. When I wake up, there is no sign of her.

"Everything in the house goes on as usual; but all are in a state of dubiety, and look questioningly and reproachfully at me, supposing that it is all my fault. And within me is still the same struggle — anger because she torments me, and anxiety about her.

"About eleven o'clock in the morning her sister comes as her envoy; and she begins in the usual way: —

"'She is in a terrible state of mind. Now what does it all mean? Something must have happened.'

"I speak about the incompatibility of her temper, and I asseverate that I have done nothing.

"'But you see that things cannot be allowed to go on in this way,' says she.

"'It is all her affair, not mine,' I say. 'I shall not

take the first step. If it be a separation, then let it be a separation.'

"My sister-in-law goes away without getting any satisfaction. I have spoken boldly that I would not take the first step; but as soon as she has gone, and I see the poor, frightened children, I am already prepared to take the first step. I should even be glad to do so, but I don't know how. Again I walk up and down and smoke, and after breakfast fortify myself with vodka and wine, and attain what I was unconsciously desirous of: I do not see the stupidity, the cowardice of my position.

"About three she returns. She meets me, but has nothing to say. I imagine that she has come to seek for a reconciliation, and I begin to tell her how I had been led on by her reproaches. She, with the same harsh, terribly harassed face, replies that she has not come to indulge in explanations, but to take the children away — that we cannot possibly live together.

"I begin to explain that I was not the one to blame, that it was she who had driven me out of my senses.

"She looks at me sternly, triumphantly, and then says: —

"'Say no more, you will be sorry enough.'

"I reply that I cannot endure any comedy.

"Then she screams out something which I cannot comprehend and flees to her room. And she turns the key behind her; she has locked herself in. I knock; no answer, and full of wrath, I wait.

"At the end of half an hour Liza comes running in with tears in her eyes.

"'What has happened?'

"'I cannot hear mamma.'

"We go to her room. I press against the door with all my might. The bolt happens to be not wholly pushed in, and both halves of the door yield. I hasten to the bed. She is lying on it in an uncomfortable position in her petticoats and boots. On the table is an empty opium bottle. We bring her to consciousness. Tears and ultimate reconciliation. But it is no reconcili-

ation; in the soul of each of us is the same old anger against each other, and an additional sense of exasperation for the pain which this quarrel has caused and which each blames the other for. But this trouble must be somehow ended, and life goes on in its old grooves. But in the same way such quarrels and even worse ones take place regularly all the time — now with a week's interval, now a month's interval, now every day, and it is always the same thing.

"One time I even applied for a foreign passport — the quarrel had lasted two days. But there ensued a semi-explanation, a semi-reconciliation, and I stayed.

CHAPTER XXI

"Such then were our relations when that man appeared. He came to Moscow — his name was Trukhachevsky — and he came to my house. It was in the morning. I received him. In former times we had been on familiar terms.[1] He endeavored, sometimes using the more formal, sometimes the more familiar, form of address, to keep on his old footing of thee and thou, but I quickly settled the question by using the formal 'you' and he immediately took the hint. Even at the first glance he impressed me unfavorably. But strangely enough some peculiar fatal power impelled me not to keep him at a distance, to send him away, but rather to draw him nearer to me. Why, what could have been simpler than to have talked coolly with him a few minutes, and to have said 'good morning' without introducing him to my wife?

"But no, I talked with him deliberately about his playing, and remarked that we had been told that he had given up playing the fiddle. He replied that on the contrary he was playing now more than ever before. He recalled the fact that I, too, had once played. I said that I had given up playing, but that my wife played very well. Wonderful thing! My relations to him that

[1] *Mui buili na tui* — that is, we used the second person singular.

very first day, that very first hour of my meeting with him, were such as they could have been only after all that occurred subsequently. There was something strained in my relations with him; I noticed every word, every expression, said by him or myself, and attributed importance to them.

"I presented him to my wife. Immediately a conversation on music began between them, and he offered his services to practise with her. My wife, as was always the case with her at that later period of her life, was very elegant and fascinating, captivatingly beautiful. He evidently pleased her at first sight. Moreover, she was delighted with the prospect of having the gratification of playing with violin and piano, which she liked so much that she had once hired a fiddler from the theater, and her face expressed this pleasure. But as soon as she saw me, she instantly understood how I felt about it, and her expression changed, and our game of mutual deceit began. I smiled pleasantly, pretending it was very agreeable to me. He, looking at my wife as all immoral men look at pretty women, pretended that he was interested in nothing else but the topic of conversation, especially that part which did not interest him at all. She tried to seem indifferent, but my falsely smiling expression of jealousy, so well known to her, and his lecherous look evidently disturbed her. I saw that from his very first glance her eyes shone with peculiar brilliancy, and apparently as a consequence of my jealousy there passed between him and her something like an electrical shock, calling forth something like a uniformity in the expression of their eyes and their smiles. She blushed, he reddened. She smiled, he smiled. They talked about music, about Paris, about all sorts of trifles. He rose to take his leave, and stood smiling with his hat resting against his quivering thigh, and looked now at her, now at me, apparently waiting to see what we would do.

"I remember that moment especially because at that moment I might have refrained from inviting him to call again, and if I had, the trouble would not have happened. But I looked at him and her.

"'Do not think for an instant that I am jealous of you,' said I, mentally, to her, 'or that I am afraid of you,' said I, mentally, to him, and I invited him to come some evening and bring his fiddle and play with my wife. She looked at me in surprise, blushed, and as if startled, began to plead off, declaring that she did not play well enough. This refusal of hers irritated me still more, and I insisted on it with all the more vehemence. I remember the strange feeling I had as I looked at the back of his head and his white neck, strongly contrasting with his black hair which was combed back on both sides, as he left us with a springy gait like that of a bird. I cannot help acknowledging to myself that this man's presence was a torture to me.

"'It depends on me,' I said to myself, 'to act in such a way as never to see him again. But so to act would be equivalent to a confession that I fear him. No, I do not fear him; it would be too humiliating,' I said to myself. And there in the anteroom, knowing that my wife was listening to me, I insisted that he should come back that very evening and bring his fiddle with him. He promised that he would and took his departure.

"In the evening he came with his fiddle, and they played together. But for a long time the music did not go very well; we had not the pieces that he wanted, and those he had my wife could not play without preparation. I was very fond of music and sympathized with their playing, arranging the music-stand for him and turning over the leaves. They managed to play something — a few songs without words and a sonata by Mozart. He played excellently, and he had to the highest degree what is called 'temperament' — moreover, a delicate, noble art, entirely out of keeping with his character.

"He was, of course, far stronger than my wife, and he helped her and at the same time politely praised her playing. He behaved very well. My wife seemed interested only in the music, and was very simple and natural. Though I also pretended to be interested in

the music, still, all the evening, I did not cease to be tortured by jealousy. From the first moment when his eyes fell on my wife I saw that the wild beast existing in them both, out of the reach of all the conditions of their position and the society in which they lived, was asking, 'Is it possible?' and answering its own question with a 'Yes, certainly it is.' I saw that he had never expected to find in my wife, in a society lady of Moscow, such a fascinating creature, and that he was delighted. Therefore there could be no doubt in his mind that she was harmonious with him. The whole question consisted in how the insufferable husband should not interfere with them. If I myself had been pure, I should not have understood this, but I, like the majority of men, had indulged in the same notions of women, until I was married, and therefore I could read his soul like a book.

"I was especially tormented by the fact that I could remark that her feelings and mine were in a state of constant irritation only occasionally interrupted by our habitual sensuality; while this man, both by his external elegance and by his novelty, by the fact that he was a stranger, but chiefly because of his indubitably great musical talent, by the proximity due to their playing together, by the influence produced by music, especially by a fiddle, on a very impressionable nature — all this, I say, made it inevitable that this man should please her, and more than that, that he should get a complete ascendancy over her, without the least hesitation, conquer, overwhelm, fascinate, enchain, and do with her whatever he willed. I could not help seeing that, and I suffered awfully. But in spite of this, or possibly in consequence of it, some force, against my will, compelled me to be especially polite and even affectionate to him. Whether I did this to show my wife, to show him, that I was not afraid of it, or whether I did it to deceive myself, I do not know; only I could not from the very first be natural with him. In order not to yield to my desire to kill him on the spot, I had to be friendly toward him. At dinner I treated him to expensive

wines, I praised him for his playing and talked with him with a peculiarly affectionate smile, and invited him to dinner on the following Sunday, and to play again with my wife. I said I would ask some of my musical friends to hear him. And so it came to an end."

And Pozdnuishef, under the influence of powerful emotion, changed his position and emitted his peculiar sounds.

"It is strange what an effect the presence of that man had on me," he began once more, evidently making an effort to become calm.

"Two or three days after this I came home from an exhibition, and as I entered the vestibule I became conscious of a sudden feeling of oppression, exactly as if a stone had been rolled on my heart, and I could not explain it to myself. It was due to the fact that as I was passing through the vestibule I noticed something which reminded me of him. Only when I reached my library was I able to explain what it was, and I returned to the vestibule to verify it. Yes, I had not been mistaken, it was his cloak. A fashionable cloak, you know. Everything relating to him, although I could not explain the why and wherefore, I remarked with extraordinary attention. I asked if he was there, and the servant said 'yes.' I passed through the recitation-room, not the drawing-room, into the 'hall.' Liza, my daughter, was sitting with her book, and the nurse with the little girl was sitting at the table spinning a cover. The door into the 'hall' was closed, but I could hear the monotonous arpeggios and the sound of her voice and his. I listened, but could not decide what to do. Evidently the notes of the piano were played on purpose to drown out their words, perhaps their kisses. My God, what a storm arose in me! The mere thought of the wild beast which then awoke in me fills me with horror. My heart suddenly contracted, then stopped beating, and then it began to throb like a sledge-hammer.

"The chief feeling, as always in any outburst of anger, was pity for myself. 'Before the children, before the nurse,' I exclaimed inwardly. I must have

been terrible to look at, because even Liza looked at me with frightened eyes.

"'What is there for me to do?' I asked myself. 'Shall I go in? I cannot, for God knows what I should do. But neither can I go away. The nurse is looking at me as if she understood my position. But I cannot go in.' I said this to myself and hurriedly opened the door.

"He was sitting at the piano and was playing those arpeggios with his large white fingers bent back. She was standing at one corner of the grand bending over an opened score. She was the first to see me or hear me and she looked at me. I know not whether she was startled or pretended not to be startled or really was not startled — at any rate, she did not show any agitation or even move, but merely blushed, but that was afterward.

"'How glad I am that you have come. We can't decide what to play next Sunday,' said she, in a tone which she would never have employed in addressing me when we were alone. That and the fact that she said 'we,' connecting herself and him, exasperated me. I silently bowed to him. He pressed my hand, and instantly, with a smile which seemed to me derisive, began to explain that he had brought some music for Sunday, but that they could not agree what to play; whether something difficult and classical, such as a Beethoven violin sonata, or some easy trifles. All this was so natural and simple that it was impossible to find any fault with it, and yet I was convinced that it was all a falsehood, that they had been planning how to deceive me.

"One of the most torturing conditions for jealous men — and all of us are jealous in our fashionable society — are certain social conventions whereby the greatest and most dangerous proximity is permitted to a man and a woman. People would simply make themselves ridiculous if they tried to prevent this proximity at balls, between doctors and their female patients, between artists, and especially musicians. Two people occupy themselves with the noblest of arts — music; in order to accomplish this a certain proximity is required, and this

proximity has nothing reprehensible in it, and only a stupid, jealous husband could find anything undesirable in it. But meantime all know that precisely by means of these very occupations, especially by music, the largest part of the adultery committed in the ranks of our society is committed.

"I especially confused them by the confusion which I myself showed; it was long before I could speak a word. I was like an upturned bottle from which the water will not flow because it is too full. I wanted to heap abuses on him, to drive him away; but I felt that it was my duty to be friendly and affectionate to him again, and so I was. I pretended that I approved of everything, and once more I felt that strange impulse which compelled me to treat him with a friendliness proportioned to the torment which his presence caused me.

"I told him that I had great confidence in his taste and I advised her to do the same. He stayed just as long as it was required to do away with the disagreeable impression made by my sudden appearance with such a scared face, and after a silence he took his departure, pretending that they had now determined what they would play the next day. I was perfectly convinced that in comparison with what was really occupying them, the question as to what they should play was perfectly immaterial.

"I accompanied him with more than ordinary courtesy to the vestibule — how could one fail to treat courteously a man who had come on purpose to disturb my peace of mind and destroy the happiness of a whole family? — and I pressed his soft white hand with especial affection.

CHAPTER XXII

"That whole day I did not speak to her — I could not. Her proximity produced in me such hatred of her that I feared for myself. At dinner she asked me in the presence of the children when I was going away. My duties called me the following week to a meeting in my

district. I told her when. She asked me if I needed anything for my journey. I did not say anything, and I sat in silence at the table, and silently went to my library. Of late she had got out of the habit of coming to my library, especially at that time of day. I was lying down in my library, and was angry enough. Suddenly her well-known steps were heard coming, and the terrible, ugly thought leaped to my brain that she, like Uriah's wife, had already committed the sin and wanted to hide it, and that was why she was coming to me at such an unseasonable hour.

"'Can it be that she is really coming to me?' I asked myself as I heard her approaching step.

"'If she is coming to me, then it means I am right.'

"And in my soul arose an ineffable hatred of her. Nearer, nearer came her steps.

"'Can it be that she is going by into the hall?'

"No, the door creaked and her tall, handsome figure appeared, and her face, her eyes, expressed timidity, and a desire to win my good-will, as I could easily see, and the significance of it I understood perfectly. I almost suffocated, so long I held my breath, and continuing to stare at her, I grasped my cigarette-case and began to smoke.

"'Now how can you? Some one comes to sit with you and you go to smoking;' and she sat down near me on the divan, and leaned up against me. I moved away, so as not to be in contact with her.

"'I see that you are vexed because I am going to play on Sunday,' said she.

"'Not in the least,' said I.

"'But can't I see that you are?'

"'Well, I congratulate you on your perspicacity. I see nothing except the fact that you behave like a coquette. To you all such kinds of vulgarity are pleasant, but to me they are horrible.'

"'There, now, if you are going to abuse me like an izvoshchik, then I will go.'

"'Go, then; but know that the honor of your family

is not dear to you, neither are you dear to me — the devil take you — but the honor of the family is — '

"'Now, what do you mean?'

"'Get out of my sight! for God's sake, get out.'

"I know not whether she pretended that she did not comprehend, or really did not comprehend; but she only took offense, grew angry, and instead of leaving stood in the middle of the room.

"'You have become positively unendurable,' she began. 'You have such a disposition that not even an angel could get along with you.' And, as always, trying to wound me as keenly as possible, she reminded me of the way I had treated my sister. It had happened that one time I forgot myself and spoke some very harsh words to my sister; she knew about it and that it tormented me, and so she wounded me in that place.

"After that, nothing that you could do would surprise me,' said she.

"'Yes, insult me, humiliate me, disgrace me, and make me out to blame,' said I, to myself, and suddenly a terrible anger against her seized me, such as I had never before experienced. For the first time I felt the impulse to express this anger with physical force. I leaped up and moved toward her; but at the instant that I sprang to my feet, I became conscious of my anger and asked myself, 'Is it well to give way to this impulse?' and immediately the answer came that it was, that this would serve to frighten her; and on the spot, instead of withstanding my wrath, I began to fan it to a greater heat, and to rejoice because it grew more and more intense in me.

"'Get out of here, or I will kill you,' I screamed, going closer to her and seizing her by the arm. In saying this I was conscious of raising my voice to a higher pitch, and I must have become terrible, because she became so frightened that she had not the strength to go, but merely stammered: —

"'Vasya, what is it, what is the matter with you?'

"'Go,' I cried, in a still louder tone. 'No one but you can drive me to madness. I won't be responsible for what I may do!'

"Having given free course to my madness I intoxicated myself with it, and I felt the impulse to do something extraordinary which should show the high-water mark of this madness of mine. I felt a terrible impulse to strike her, to kill her; but I knew that it was an impossibility, and therefore in order to give free course to my madness, I snatched up a paper-weight from the table, and shouting once more, 'Go!' I flung it down on the floor, near her. I aimed it carefully, so as to strike near her. Then she left the room, but remained standing in the doorway. And then while she was still looking — I did it so that she might see — I began to snatch up from the table various objects — the candlestick, the inkstand — and hurled them on the floor, still continuing to shout, —

"'Go, get out of my sight! I won't be responsible for what I may do.'

"She went, and I immediately ceased.

"In the course of an hour the nurse came and told me that my wife was suffering from hysterics. I went to her; she was sobbing and laughing, and could not speak a word and was trembling all over. She was not pretending, but was really ill. Toward morning she grew calm, and we had a reconciliation under the influence of that passion which we call 'love.'

"In the morning, after our reconciliation I confessed to her that I was jealous of Trukhachevsky. She was not in the least confused, and laughed in the most natural manner. So strange even to her seemed, as she said, the possibility of being drawn to such a man.

"'Is it possible that a respectable woman could feel anything for such a man beyond the pleasure which his music might afford? But if you wish, I am ready not to see him again. Even though all the guests are invited for Sunday, write him that I am ill, and that will be the end of it. Only one thing makes me indignant, and that is that any one could imagine, and especially he himself, that he is dangerous. I am too proud to permit myself to think of such a thing.'

"And evidently she was not prevaricating; she believed

in what she was saying; she hoped by these words to evoke in herself scorn for him and to defend herself from him, but she did not succeed in this. Everything went against her, especially that cursed music.

"Thus the episode ended, and on Sunday the guests gathered and they played together again.

CHAPTER XXIII

"I THINK it is superfluous to remark that I was very ostentatious; there would not be any living in our general society if it were not for ostentation. Thus on that Sunday I took the greatest pains to arrange for our dinner and for the evening musicale. I myself ordered the things for dinner and invited the guests.

"At six o'clock the guests had arrived, and he also, in evening dress with diamonds shirt studs of bad taste. He was free and easy, made haste to answer all questions with a smile of sympathy and appreciation — you know what I mean, with that peculiar expression that signifies that everything you say or do is exactly what he expected. I remarked now with especial satisfaction everything about him calculated to give an unfavorable impression, because all this served to calm me, and prove that he stood in my wife's eyes on such a low level that, as she said, she could not possibly descend to it. I did not allow myself to be jealous. In the first place, I had already been through the pangs of that torment and needed rest; in the second place, I wanted to have faith in my wife's asseverations, and I did believe in them. But in spite of the fact that I was not jealous, still I was not at my ease with either of them, and during the dinner and the first half of the evening before the music began, I kept watching their motions and glances all the time.

"The dinner was like any dinner — dull and conventional. The music began rather early. Oh, how well I remember all the details of that evening. I remember how he brought his fiddle, opened the box, took off the

covering which had been embroidered for him by some lady, took out the instrument and began to tune it. I remember how my wife sat with a pretendedly indifferent face under which I saw that she was hiding great diffidence, — the diffidence caused chiefly by distrust of her own ability, — how she took her seat at the grand piano with the same affected look and struck the usual *a*, which was followed by the pizzicato of the fiddle and the getting into tune. I remember how, then, they looked at each other, glanced at the audience, and then made some remark, and the music began. He struck the first chords. His face grew grave, stern, and sympathetic, and as he bent his head to listen to the sounds he produced, he placed his fingers cautiously on the strings. The piano replied. And it began." ....

Pozdnuishef paused and several times emitted his peculiar sounds. He started to speak again but snuffed through his nose and again paused.

"They played Beethoven's Kreutzer Sonata," he finally went on to say. "Do you know the first *presto* — You know it?" he cried. "U! U! U!.... That sonata is a terrible thing. And especially that movement. And music in general is a terrible thing. I cannot comprehend it. What is music? What does it do? And why does it have the effect it has? They say music has the effect of elevating the soul — rubbish! falsehood! It has its effect, it has a terrible effect, — I am speaking about its effect on me, — but not at all by elevating the soul. Its effect is neither to elevate nor to degrade, but to excite. How can I explain it to you? Music makes me forget myself, my actual position; it transports me into another state not my natural one; under the influence of music it seems to me that I feel what I do not really feel, that I understand what I do not really understand, that I can do what I can't do. I explain this by the fact that music acts like gaping or laughing; I am not sleepy but I gape, looking at any one else who is gaping; I have nothing to laugh at, but I laugh when I hear others laugh.

"Music instantaneously transports me into that mental

condition in which he who composed it found himself. I blend my soul with his, and together with him am transported from one mood to another; but why this is so I cannot tell. For instance, he who composed the Kreutzer Sonata — Beethoven — he knew why he was in that mood. That mood impelled him to do certain things, and therefore that mood meant something for him, but it means nothing for me. And that is why music excites and does not bring to any conclusion. Now they play a military march; the soldiers move forward under its strains, and the music accomplishes something; they play dance music and I dance, and the music accomplishes something; they perform a mass, I take the sacrament, again the music accomplishes its purpose. But in other cases there is only excitement, and it is impossible to tell what to do in this state of mind. And that is why music is so terrible, why it sometimes has such an awful effect. In China, music is regulated by government, and this is as it should be. Is it permissible that any one whatever shall hypnotize another person, or many persons, and then do with them what he pleases? And especially if this hypnotizer happens to be the first immoral man that comes along.

"And indeed it is a terrible means to place in any one's hands. For example, how could any one play this Kreutzer Sonata, the first *presto*, in a drawing-room before ladies dressed *décolletées?* To play that *presto* and then to applaud it, and then to eat ices and talk over the last bit of scandal? These things should be played only in certain grave, significant conditions, and only then when certain deeds corresponding to such music are to be accomplished: first play the music and perform that which this music was composed for. But to call forth an energy which is not consonant with the place or the time, and an impulse which does not manifest itself in anything, cannot fail to have a baneful effect. On me, at least, it had a horrible effect. It seemed to me that entirely new impulses, new possibilities, were revealed to me in myself, such as I had never dreamed of before.

"'This is the way I should live and think — not at all as I have lived and thought hitherto,' seemed to be whispered into my soul. What this new thing was I now knew I could not explain even to myself, but the consciousness of this new state of mind was very delightful. All those faces — his and my wife's among them — presented themselves in a new light.

"After the *allegro* they played the beautiful but rather commonplace and far from original *andante*, with the cheap variations and the weak *finale*. Then at the request of the guests they played other things, first an elegy by Ernst and then various other trifles. All this was very good, but it did not produce on me a hundredth part of the impression which the first did. But all the music had the same background as the impression which the first produced.

"I felt gay and happy all the evening. I never saw my wife look as she did that evening: her gleaming eyes, her gravity and serenity of expression while she was playing, her perfectly melting mood, her tender, pathetic, and blissful smile, after they had finished playing; I saw it all, but attributed to it no other significance other than that she was experiencing the same thing as I was; that before her, as before me, new and hitherto unexampled feelings were revealed, dimly rising in her consciousness. The evening was pronounced a great success, and when it was over the guests took their departure.

"Knowing that I was to be going to the district meeting in two days, Trukhachevsky, on bidding me farewell, said that he hoped that when he next came to Moscow he should have another pleasant evening like that. From this remark I was able to conclude that he did not deem it possible to visit my house during my absence, and that was agreeable to me. It seemed clear that as I should not return before his departure we should not meet again.

"For the first time I shook hands with him with genuine pleasure, and I thanked him for the gratification he had afforded us. He also bade my wife a final farewell,

and their final farewell seemed to me most natural and proper. Everything was admirable. Both my wife and I were very well satisfied with the evening.

CHAPTER XXIV

"Two days later I started for my district, taking leave of my wife in the happiest and calmest frame of mind.

"In the district there was always a pile of work and a special life, a special little world. For two days I worked ten hours a day in my office. On the third day a letter from my wife was brought to me in the office. I read it then and there.

"She wrote about the children, about her uncle, about the nurse-girl, about the things she had bought, and mentioned as something perfectly commonplace the fact that Trukhachevsky had been to call, and had brought the music he had promised, and that he had offered to come and play again, but that she had declined.

"I did not remember that he had promised to bring any music. I had supposed that he had taken his final leave at that time, and so this gave me an unpleasant surprise. But I was so deeply engrossed in business that I could not stop to think it over, and it was not until evening, when I returned to my room, that I reread her letter.

"Besides the fact that Trukhachevsky had called again in my absence, the whole tone of the letter seemed to me unnatural. The frantic wild beast of jealousy roared in his cage and wanted to break forth; but I was afraid of this beast and I made haste to shut him up.

"'What a vile feeling this jealousy is,' I said to myself. 'What can be more natural than what she has written?'

"And I lay on my bed and tried to think of the business which I should have to attend to the next day. I never go to sleep very quickly during these sessions in a new place, but this time I dropped asleep almost im-

mediately. But as you know it often happens, I suddenly felt something like an electric shock, and started up wide awake. As I woke, I woke with a thought of her, of my carnal love for her, and of Trukhachevsky, and how all had been accomplished between him and her. Horror and rage crushed my heart. But I tried to reason myself out of it.

"'What rubbish!' I exclaimed. 'There is not the slightest basis for any such suspicions. And how can I humiliate myself and her by harboring such horrible thoughts? Here is some one in the nature of a hired fiddler, with a reputation of being disreputable, and could a respectable woman, the mother of a family, *my wife*, suddenly fall a victim to such a man? What an absurdity.'

"That is what I argued on one side, but on the other, came these thoughts: —

"'How could it fail to be so? Why is it not the simplest and most comprehensible thing? Was it not for that I married her? Was it not for that I lived with her? Was it not that which makes me necessary to her? And would not therefore another man, this musician, be likewise necessary to her? He is an unmarried man, healthy, — I remember how lustily he crunched the gristle in the cutlet, and put the glass of wine to his red lips, — he is well-fed, sleek, and not only without principles, but evidently guided by the theory that it is best to take advantage of whatever pleasures present themselves. And between them is the tie of music; the subtle lust of the senses. What can restrain him? She? Yes, but who is she? She is as much of a riddle as she ever has been. I don't know her. I know her only as an animal; and nothing can restrain an animal, or is likely to.'

"Only at that instant I recalled their faces that evening after they had played the Kreutzer Sonata, and while they were performing some passionate piece, — I have forgotten what it was, — something sentimental to the degree of obscenity.

"'How could I have come away?' I asked myself, as I recalled their faces. 'Was it not perfectly evident

that the fatal step was taken by them that evening, and was it not evident that even from that evening on, not only was there no bar between them, but that both of them — she especially — felt some sense of shame after what happened to them? I recalled with what a soft, pathetic, and blissful smile she wiped away the perspiration from her heated face, as I approached the piano. Even then they avoided looking at each other, and only at dinner when he poured her out some water did they look at each other, and timidly smile. I remembered with horror that glance which I had intercepted, and that almost imperceptible smile.

"'Yes, the fatal step has been taken,' said a voice within me; and instantly another voice seemed to say quite the contrary. 'You are crazy; this cannot be,' said this second voice.

"It was painful for me to lie there in the darkness. I lighted a match, and then it seemed to me terrible to be in that little room with its yellow wall-paper. I began to smoke a cigarette, and, as is always the case when one turns round in the same circle of irresolvable contradictions, I smoked; and I smoked one cigarette after another, for the purpose of befogging my mind and not seeing the contradictions.

"I did not sleep all night, and at five o'clock, having made up my mind that I could remain no longer in such a state of tension, but would instantly go back, I got up, wakened the bell-boy who waited on me, and sent him after horses. I sent a note to the Session stating that I had been called back to Moscow on extraordinary business, and therefore begged them to let another member take my place. At eight o'clock I took my seat in the tarantas and started."

CHAPTER XXV

The conductor came through the train, and noticing that our candle was almost burned out, extinguished it instead of putting in another. Out-of-doors it was

beginning to grow light. Pozdnuishef ceased speaking and sighed heavily all the time the conductor was in the carriage. He proceeded with his story only when the conductor had taken his departure, and the only sound we could hear in the semi-darkness of the carriage was the rattle of the windows and regular snore of the merchant's clerk. In the twilight of the dawn I could not make out Pozdnuishef's face at all. I could only hear his passionate voice growing ever more and more excited: —

"I had to travel thirty-five versts by tarantas and eight hours by rail. It was splendid traveling with horses. It was frosty autumnal weather with a brilliant sun, — you know that kind of weather when the tires leave their print on the slippery road. The roads were smooth, the light was dazzling, and the atmosphere was exhilarating. Yes, it was jolly traveling by tarantas. As soon as it grew light, and I was fairly on my way, my heart felt lighter.

"As I looked at the horses, at the fields, at the persons I met, I forgot what my errand was. It sometimes seemed to me that I was simply out for a drive, and that there was nothing whatever to stir me so. And I felt particularly happy at thus forgetting myself. If by chance it occurred to me where I was bound, I said to myself: —

"'Wait and see what will be; don't think about it now.'

"About half-way an event happened which delayed me, and still more tended to distract my attention; the tarantas broke down, and it was necessary to mend it. This break-down had a great significance because it caused me to reach Moscow at midnight instead of at five o'clock as we had expected, and home at one o'clock, for I missed the express, and was obliged to take a way train. The search for a telyega, the mending of the tarantas, the settlement of the bill, tea at an inn, the conversation with the hostler, — all this served to divert me more and more. By twilight everything was ready, and I was on my way once more, and during

the evening it was still pleasanter traveling than by day. There was a young moon, a slight touch of frost, the roads were still excellent, and so were the horses, the postilion was jolly, and so I traveled on and enjoyed myself, scarce thinking at all of what was awaiting me; or perhaps I enjoyed myself especially because I knew what was awaiting me, and I was having my last taste of the joys of life.

"But this calm state of mind, the power of controlling my feelings, came to an end as soon as I ceased traveling with the horses. As soon as I entered the railway carriage an entirely different state of things began. This eight-hour journey by rail was something horrible to me, and I shall never forget it as long as I live. Either because, as soon as I entered the carriage I vividly imagined myself as having already reached the end, or because railway travel has an exciting effect on people. As soon as I took my seat I had no longer any control over my imagination, which ceaselessly, with extraordinary vividness, began to bring up before me pictures kindling my jealousy; one after another they arose and always to the same effect: what had taken place during my absence, and how she had deceived me! I was on fire with indignation, wrath, and a peculiar sense of frenzy, caused by my humiliation, as I contemplated these pictures, and I could not tear myself away from them, could not help gazing at them, could not rub them out, could not help evoking them. And then the more I contemplated these imaginary pictures the more I was convinced of their reality. The vividness with which these pictures presented themselves before me seemed to serve as a proof of the actuality of what I imagined. A kind of a devil, perfectly against my will, suggested and stimulated the most horrible suggestions. A conversation I had once with Trukhachevsky's brother occurred to me, and with a sort of enthusiasm I lacerated my heart with this conversation, applying it to Trukhachevsky and my wife.

"It had taken place long before, but it came back clearly to me. I remember that once, Trukhachevsky's

brother, in reply to a question whether he ever went to certain houses, stated that no decent man would ever go to such places, where there was danger of contracting disease, and that it was vile and disgusting; one could always find some society woman to serve his purpose. And now here was his brother and he had found my wife!

"'To be sure she is no longer young; she has a tooth missing on one side of her mouth, her face is somewhat swollen,' I said, trying to look from his standpoint. 'But what difference does that make? One must take what one can get. Yes, he is conferring a favor on her to take her as his mistress,' said I, to myself. 'Then besides, there is no danger with her. .... No, it is impossible!' I exclaimed in horror. 'There is no possibility of it, not the least, and there is not the slightest basis for any such conjectures. Has she not told me that to her it was a humiliating thought that I could be jealous of him. ....Yes, but she is a liar, always a liar,' I would cry, and then begin the same thing over again.

"There were only two passengers in my carriage; an old woman with her husband, both of them very silent, and they got out at the first stop, and I was left alone. I was like a wild beast in a cage; now I would jump up and rush to the window, then staggering I would walk back and forth through the aisle trying to make the train go faster; but the carriage, with all its seats and its window-panes, shook just exactly as ours is doing now." ....

And Pozdnuishef sprang to his feet and took a few steps and then sat down again.

"Oh, I dread, I dread these railway carriages — they fill me with horror — yes, I dread them awfully," he went on saying. "I said to myself, 'I must think of something else. All right, let me think of the landlord of the inn where I took tea. Well! Then before my eyes would arise the long-bearded dvornik and his grandson, a boy about as old as my Vasya.

"'My Vasya! He will see a musician kissing his mother. What will happen to his poor soul at the sight? But what will she care? She is in love.'

"And again would arise the same visions.

"'No, no! Well I will think about the inspection of the hospital. Yesterday that sick man complained of the doctor. A doctor with mustaches just like Trukhachevsky's. .... And how brazenly he — they both deceived me, when he said that he was going away.' ....

"And again it would begin. Everything I thought of had some connection with them. I suffered awfully. My chief suffering lay in my ignorance, in the uncertainty of it all, in my question whether I ought to love her or hate her. These sufferings were so intense that I remember the temptation came into my mind with great fascination to go out on the track and throw myself under the train on the rails, and so end it. Then, at least, there would be no further doubt. The one thing that prevented me from doing so was my self-pity which was the immediate source of my hatred of her. Toward him, also, I had a strange feeling of hatred, and a consciousness of my humiliation and of his victory, but toward her my hatred was awful.

"'It is impossible to put an end to myself and to leave her behind. I must do something to make her suffer, so that she may appreciate that I have suffered,' I said to myself.

"I got out at all the stations in order to divert my mind. At one station I noticed that people were drinking in the buffet, and I immediately fortified myself with vodka. Next me stood a Jew and he also was drinking. He spoke to me and that I might not be alone in my carriage I went with him into his third-class compartment, though it was filthy and full of smoke and littered with the husks of seeds. There I sat down next him, and he went on chatting and relating anecdotes. I listened to him, but did not take in what he said because I kept thinking of my own affairs. He noticed this and tried to attract my attention; then I got up and went back to my own carriage.

"'I must think it all over again,' I said to myself, 'whether what I think is true and whether there is any foundation for my anguish.' I sat down, desiring calmly

to think it over, but instantly in place of calm deliberation, the same tumult of thought began; in place of argument, pictures and figments of the imagination.

"'How often have I not tortured myself so,' I said to myself, for I remembered similar paroxysms of jealousy in times gone by, 'and then there was no ground for them. And so now, possibly, nay probably, I shall find her calmly sleeping; she will wake up and be glad to see me, and I shall be conscious both in her words and in her looks that nothing has taken place and that my suspicions were groundless. Oh! how delightful that would be!'

"'But no, this has been so too frequently and now it will be so no longer' said some inner voice, and once more it would begin anew. Ah! what a punishment was here! I should not take a young man to a syphilitic hospital to cure him of his passion for women, but into my own soul, and give him a glimpse of the fiends that were rending it. You see it was horrible that I claimed an undoubted absolute right to her body just as if it had been my own body, and at the same time I was conscious that I could not control that body of hers, that it was not mine, and that she had the power to dispose of it as she chose, and that she did not choose to dispose of it as I wished. I could not even do anything to her or to him. He, like Vanka the cellarer before he was hanged, will sing a song of how he had kissed her on her sugary lips and the like. He would have the best of me. And with her I could do even less. If she had not yet done anything out of the way, but had it in mind to,— and I know that she did,— the case is still worse; it would be better to have it done with, so that I might know, so as to have this uncertainty settled.

"I could not tell what I desired. I desired her not to want what she could not help wanting. This was absolute madness.

CHAPTER XXVI

"At the next to the last station, when the conductor came along to take the tickets, I picked up my belongings and went out on the platform, and the consciousness of what was about to take place still further increased my agitation. I became cold, and my jaws trembled so that my teeth chattered. Mechanically I followed the crowd out of the station, engaged an izvoshchik, took my seat in his cab and drove away. As I drove along, glancing at the occasional pedestrians, at the dvorniks and the shadows cast by the street lamps and my cab, now in front and now behind, my mind seemed to be a blank. By the time we had driven half a verst from the station my feet became cold, and I remembered that I had removed my woolen stockings in the train and put them into my gripsack.

"'Where is my grip? Have I brought it with me?'

"Yes, I had. 'But where is my hamper?'

"Then I remembered that I had entirely forgotten about my baggage; but while I was thinking about it, I found my receipt and decided that it was not worth while to return for it, and so I drove home.

"In spite of my endeavors, I can never remember to this day what my state of mind was at that time, — what I thought, what I desired, I cannot tell. I only remember that I was conscious that something terrible and very vital in my life was in preparation. Whether this important event proceeded from the fact that I thought so or because I foreboded it, I do not know. Perhaps after what happened subsequently, all the preceding moments have taken on a gloomy shade in my recollection.

"I reached the doorstep. It was one o'clock. Several izvoshchiks were standing in front of the door waiting for fares in the light cast by the windows — the lighted windows were in our apartment, in the 'hall,' and the drawing-room. I made no attempt to explain to myself why our windows were still lighted so late

at night, but still expectant of something dreadful about to happen, I mounted the steps and rang the bell. Yegor, the lackey, a good-natured, zealous, but extremely stupid fellow, answered it. The first thing that struck my eyes in the vestibule was a cloak hanging on a peg with other outside garments. I ought to have been surprised, but I was not, because it was what I expected.

"'It is true,' I said to myself.

"When I asked Yegor who was there and he mentioned Trukhachevsky, I asked:—

"'Is there any one else with them?' and he said:—

"'No one.' I remember that in his reply, there was an intonation, as if he felt he was giving me a pleasure in dispelling my apprehension that any one else was there.

"'It is true, it is true,' I seemed to say to myself.

"'But the children?'

"'Thank God, they are well. They have been asleep for a long time.'

"I could not breathe freely, nor could I prevent the trembling of my lower jaw.

"'Yes, of course, it is not as I thought it might be; whereas formerly I imagined some misfortune and yet found everything all right, as usual, now it was not usual, now it was altogether what I had imagined and fancied that I only imagined, but it was now real. It was all....'

"I almost began to sob, but instantly a fiend suggested:—

"'Shed tears, be sentimental; but they will calmly separate; there will be no proof, and you will be forever in doubt and torment.'

"Thereupon my self-pity vanished, and in its place came a strange feeling of gladness that my torture was now at an end, that I could punish her, could get rid of her, that I could give free course to my wrath. And I gave free course to my wrath — I became a wild beast, fierce and sly.

"'No matter, no matter,' I said to Yegor, who was

about to go to the drawing-room, 'attend to this instead: take an izvoshchik, and go as quickly as you can to the station for my luggage; here is the receipt. Off with you!'

"He went into the corridor to get his paletot. Fearing that he might disturb them, I accompanied him to his little room, and waited till he had got his things on. In the drawing-room, just through the wall, I could hear the sound of voices, and the clatter of knives and dishes. They were eating, and had not heard the bell.

"'If only no one leaves the room now,' I said to myself.

"Yegor put on his paletot trimmed with astrakhan wool, and started. I let him out and shut the door behind him, and I felt a sense of dread at the idea of being left alone, of having to act instantly.

"How? I did not know as yet. All I knew was that all was ended, that there could be no longer any doubt as to her guilt, and that I should presently punish her, and put an end to my relations with her.

"Hitherto I had been troubled with vacillation, and I had said to myself: 'Maybe it is not so, maybe you are mistaken;' now this was at an end. Everything was now irrevocably decided. Clandestinely! alone with him! at night! This proved perfect forgetfulness of everything, or something even worse. Such audacity, such insolence, in crime was deliberately adopted in order that its very insolence might serve as a proof of innocence. All was clear, there could be no doubt! I was afraid of only one thing,— that they might escape, might invent some new deception, and deprive me of manifest proof, and the possibility of convincing myself. And so as to catch them as promptly as possible I went, not through the drawing-room, but through the corridor and the nursery, on my tiptoes, into the 'hall' where they were sitting.

"In the first nursery-room the boys were sound asleep; in the second nursery-room the nurse stirred, and was on the point of waking up; and I imagined to myself what she would think if she knew it all; and

then such a sense of self-pity came over me at this thought that I could not restrain my tears, and in order not to wake the children I ran out, on my tiptoes, into the corridor and into my own room, flung myself down on my divan, and sobbed.

"'I, an upright man .... I, the son of my own parents .... I, who have dreamed all my life of the delights of domestic happiness .... I, a husband who have never been unfaithful to my wife!.... And here she, the mother of five children, and she is embracing a musician because he has red lips!

"'No, she is not human. She is a bitch, a vile bitch! Next to the room where sleep her children, for whom, all her life, she has pretended to feel affection. And to write me what she wrote! And so insolently to throw herself into my arms! And how do I know? perhaps this same sort of thing has been taking place all the time! Who knows but the children whom I have always supposed to be mine may not have some lackey for their father!

"'And if I had come home to-morrow she would have met me with her hair becomingly done up, and her graceful, indolent movements.' All the time I seemed to see her fascinating, abhorrent face .... 'and this wild beast of jealousy would have taken his position forever in my heart, and torn it. What will the nurse think? .... and Yegor? .... and poor Lizotchka? She already has her suspicions. And this brazen impudence, and this falsehood! .... And this animal sensuality which I know so well?' I said to myself.

"I tried to get up, but could not. My heart throbbed so that I could not stand on my legs.

"'Yes, I shall die of a stroke. She will have killed me. That is just what she wants! What would it be to her to kill me? Indeed, it would be quite too advantageous, and I will not bestow that gratification on her. Yes, here I am sitting, and yonder they are eating and talking together, and ....

"'Yes, in spite of the fact that she is no longer in her first youth, he will not despise her .... still, she is not

bad-looking, and, what is the main thing, at least she is not dangerous for his precious health. Why, then, have I not strangled her already?' I asked myself, recalling that moment a week before when I drove her out of my library, and then smashed things. I had a vivid remembrance of the state of mind in which I was then; and not only had the remembrance, but I was conscious of the same necessity of striking, of destroying, as I had been conscious of before. I remember how I wanted to do something, and how all considerations except those that were necessary for action vanished from my mind. I came into the state of a wild animal, or rather, of a man under the influence of physical excitement in time of danger, when he acts definitely, deliberately, but without losing a single instant, and all the time with a single object in view.

"The first thing I did was to take off my boots, and then, in my stocking feet, I went to the wall, where various weapons and daggers were hung up over the divan, and I took down a curved Damascus dagger, which had never been used, and was very keen. I drew it out of its sheath. I remember the sheath slipped down behind the divan, and I remember I said to myself: —

"'I must find it afterward or else it will get lost.' Then I took off my paletot which I had all the time been wearing and, gliding along in my stockings, I went *there*.

CHAPTER XXVII

"And stepping up stealthily, I suddenly threw open the door. I remember the expression of both of their faces. I remember that expression because it afforded me a tormenting pleasure — it was an expression of horror. That was the very thing I needed! I shall never forget the expression of despairing horror which came into their faces the first second when they saw me. He was seated, it seems, at the table, but when he saw me or heard me, he leaped to his feet and stood with

his back against the sideboard. His face bore the one unmistakable expression of horror. On her face also was an expression of horror, but there was something else blended with it. If it had not been for that something else, maybe what happened would not have happened; but in the expression of her face there was, or so there seemed to me at the first instant, a look of disappointment, of annoyance that her pleasure in his love and her enjoyment with him were interrupted. It was as if she desired nothing else than to be left undisturbed in her present happiness. This expression and the other lingered but an instant on their faces. The expression of horror on his face instantly grew into a look, which asked the question: 'Is it possible to lie out of it or not? If it is possible, now is the time to begin. If not, then something else must be done — but what?'

"He looked questioningly at her. On her face the expression of annoyance and disappointment changed as it seemed to me when she looked at him into one of solicitude for him.

"I stood for an instant on the threshold holding the dagger behind my back.

"During that second he smiled, and in a voice so indifferent that it was ludicrous, he began: —

"'We have been having some music.'

"'Why! I was not expecting you,' she began at the same instant, adopting his tone.

"But neither he nor she finished their sentences. The very same madness which I had experienced a week before took possession of me. Once more I felt the necessity of destroying something, of using violence; once more I felt the ecstasy of madness and I yielded to it. Neither finished what they were saying. The something else which he was afraid of began, and it swept away instantaneously all that they had to say.

"I threw myself on her, still concealing the dagger in order that he might not prevent me from striking her in the side under the breast. I had chosen the spot at the very beginning. The instant I threw myself on her he

saw my design, and with an action which I never expected from him, he seized me by the arm and cried: —

"'Think what you .... Help!'

"I wrenched away my arm, and without saying a word rushed at him. His eyes met mine; he suddenly turned as pale as a sheet, even to the lips, his eyes glittered with a peculiar light, and most unexpectedly to me he slipped under the piano and darted out of the door. I was just starting to rush after him when I was detained by a weight on my left arm. It was she! I tried to break away. She clung all the more heavily to my arm and would not let me go. This unexpected hindrance, the weight of her and her touch which was repulsive to me, still further inflamed my anger. I was conscious of being in a perfect frenzy and that I ought to be terrible, and I exulted in it. I drew back my left arm with all my might and struck her full in the face with my elbow. She screamed and let go my arm. I started to chase him, but remembered that it would be ridiculous for a man to chase his wife's lover in his stockings, and I did not want to be ridiculous, but I desired to be terrible.

"Notwithstanding the terrible frenzy in which I found myself, I never for an instant forgot the impression which I might produce on others, and this impression, even to a certain degree, governed me. I came back to her. She had fallen on a couch, and with her hand held up to her eyes, which I had bruised, was looking at me. In her face were such terror and hatred of me, her enemy, as a rat might show when the trap in which it had been caught was held up. At all events I could see nothing else in her face except terror and hatred of me. It was precisely the same terror and hatred which love to another would naturally evoke. But possibly I should have restrained myself and not done what I did if she had held her tongue. But she suddenly began to speak, and she seized my hand which held the dagger: —

"'Come to your senses. What are you going to do?

What is the matter with you? There has been nothing, no harm, I swear it.'

"I should have still delayed, but these last words, from which I drew exactly the opposite conclusion, that is, that my worst fears were realized, required an answer. And the answer had to correspond with the mood to which I had wrought myself up, which had gone on in a *crescendo* and was bound to reach its climax. Madness also has its laws.

"'Do not lie, you wretch,' I cried, and with my left hand I seized her by the arm, but she tore herself away. Then, still clutching the dagger, I grasped her by the throat, pressed her over backward and began to strangle her. What a muscular throat she had! She grasped my hands with both hers, tearing them away from her throat, and I, as if I had been waiting for this opportunity, struck her with the dagger into the side under the ribs.

"When men say that in an attack of madness they don't remember what they did, it is all false, all nonsense. I remember every detail, and not for one second did I fail to remember. The more violently I kindled within me the flames of my madness, the more brightly burned the light of consciousness, so that I could not fail to see all that I did. I knew every second what I was doing. I cannot say that I knew in advance what I was going to do, but at the instant I did anything, and perhaps a little before I knew what I was up to, as if for the purpose of being able to repent, in order that I might say to myself: 'I might have stopped.' I knew that I struck below the ribs and that the dagger would penetrate. At the moment I was doing this, I knew that I was doing something, something awful, something which I had never done before and which would have awful consequences. But this consciousness flashed through my mind like lightning and was instantly followed by the deed. The deed made itself conscious with unexampled clearness. I felt and I remember the momentary resistance of her corset and of something else, and then the sinking of the blade

into the soft parts of her body. She seized the dagger with her hands, wounding them, but she did not stop me.

"Afterward, in the prison, while a moral revolution was working itself out in me, I thought much about that moment — what I might have done, and I thought it all over. I remember that a second, only a second, before the deed was accomplished, I had the terrible consciousness that I was killing and had killed a woman — a defenseless woman — my wife. I recall the horror of this consciousness, and therefore I conclude — and indeed I dimly remember — that having plunged the dagger in, I immediately withdrew it, with the desire to remedy what I had done and to put a stop to it. I stood for a second motionless, waiting to see what would happen, — and whether I might undo what I had done.

"She sprang to her feet, and shrieked: —

"'Nurse, he has killed me.'

"The nurse had heard the disturbance and was already on the threshold. I was still standing, expectant and irresolute. But at that instant the blood gushed from under her corset.

"Then only I realized that it was impossible to remedy it, and I instantly concluded that it was not necessary, that I myself did not wish to have it remedied, and that I had done the very thing I was in duty bound to do. I lingered until she fell and the nurse, with the exclamation 'Heavens,'[1] rushed to her, and then I flung the dagger down and left the room.

"'I must not get excited, I must know what I am doing,' said I to myself, looking neither at her nor at the nurse. The nurse screamed and called to the maid. I went along the corridor, and stopping to send the maid, I went to my room.

"'What must I do now?' I asked myself, and instantly made up my mind. As soon as I reached my library I went directly to the wall and took down a revolver and contemplated it. It was loaded, and I laid it on the table. Then I picked up the sheath from behind the divan, and finally I sat down on the divan.

[1] *Batyushki*, "Fathers."

"I sat long in that attitude. My mind was without a thought, without a recollection. I heard some commotion *there*. I heard some one arrive, then some one else. Then I heard and saw Yegor bringing my luggage into my library. As if that would be useful to any one now.

"'Have you heard what has happened?' I asked. 'Tell the dvornik to inform the police.'

"He said nothing, but went out. I got up, closed the door, got my cigarettes and matches, and began to smoke. I had not finished smoking my cigarette before drowsiness seized me and overcame me. I think I must have slept two hours. I remember I dreamed that she and I were friends, that we had quarreled, but had made it up, and that some trifle stood in our way; but still we were friends.

"A knock on the door awakened me.

"'It is the police,' I thought as I woke; 'it seems I must have killed her. But maybe it is she herself and nothing has happened.'

"The knocking at the door was repeated. I did not answer, but kept trying to decide the question:—

"'Had all that really taken place or not?.... Yes, it had.' I remembered the resistance of the corset and the sinking of the dagger, and a cold chill ran down my back.

"'Yes, it is true. Yes, now I must have my turn,' said I to myself. But though I said this I knew I should not kill myself. Nevertheless, I got up and once more took the revolver into my hand. But strange as it may seem, I remember how many times before I had been near suicide, as, for instance, that very day on the railway train, and it had seemed to me very easy for the very reason that I thought that by that means I could fill her with consternation.

"Now I could not kill myself or think of such a thing. 'Why should I do it?' I asked myself; and there was no answer.

"The knocking still continued at the door.

"'Yes, first I must find out who is knocking, I shall have time enough afterward....'

"I laid the revolver down and covered it with a newspaper. Then I went to the door and drew back the bolt. It was my wife's sister, a worthy but stupid widow.

"'Vasya, what does this mean?' she asked, and her ever ready tears began to gush forth.

"'What do you want?' I asked harshly. I saw that this was entirely unnecessary and that I had no reason to be gruff with her, but I could not adopt any other tone.

"'Vasya, she is dying. Ivan Zakharuitch says so.'

"Ivan Zakharuitch was her doctor, her adviser.

"'Why, is he here?' I asked, and all my rage against her flamed up once more. 'Well, suppose she is.'

"'Vasya, go to her. Oh, how horrible this is!' she exclaimed.

"'Must I go to her?' was the question that arose in my mind, and I instantly decided that I must go, that probably when a husband had killed his wife as I had, he must always go to her, that it was the proper thing to do.

"'If it is always done, then I must surely go,' I said to myself. 'Yes, if it is necessary to, I shall; I can still kill myself,' I reasoned in regard to my intention of blowing my brains out; and I followed her.

"'Now there will be phrases and grimaces, but I will not let them affect me,' said I to myself.

"'Wait,' said I to my sister. 'It is stupid to go without my boots, let me at least put on my slippers.'

CHAPTER XXVIII

"Another remarkable thing: — Once more as I left my room and went through the familiar rooms, once more arose the hope that nothing had taken place, but the odor of the vile medical appliances, iodoform, the carbolic acid, struck my senses.

"Yes, all was a reality. As I went though the corridor past the nursery I caught sight of Lizanka. She

looked at me with frightened eyes. It seemed to me then that all five of the children were there and that all of them were looking at me.

"I went to the door and the chambermaid opened it from the inside and passed out. The first thing that struck my eyes was her light gray gown lying on a chair and all discolored with blood. She was lying on our double bed, on my own side of it, — for it was easier of access on that side, and her knees were raised. She was placed in a very sloping position on pillows alone, with her kofta unbuttoned. Something had been placed over the wound. The room was full of the oppressive odor of iodoform. I was more than all struck by her swollen face, black and blue, — part of her nose and under her eyes. It was the effect of the blow that I had given her with my elbow, when she was trying to hold me back. Her beauty had all vanished, and her appearance was decidedly repulsive to me. I paused on the threshold.

"'Go to her, go,' said her sister.

"'Yes, she probably wants to confess to me,' I thought. 'Shall I forgive her? Yes, she is dying and it is permissible to forgive her,' I said mentally, striving to be magnanimous.

"I went close to her. She with difficulty raised her eyes to me — one of them was blackened, and she said with difficulty, with pauses between the words: —

"'You have had your way .... you have killed me.'

"And in her face, through her physical suffering and even the proximity of death, could be seen the old expression of cold animal hatred which I knew so well.

"'The children .... anyway .... you shall not have .... She' indicating her sister 'will take them.'

"As to what was the principal thing for me — her guilt, her unfaithfulness, she did not consider it worth while to say a word.

"'Yes .... delight yourself in what you have done.' said she, glancing at the door and sobbing. On the threshold stood her sister with the children. 'Oh, what have you done?'

"I looked at the children, at her bruised and discolored face, and for the first time forgot myself, my rights, my pride, for the first time recognized the human being in her. And so petty seemed all that had offended me, all my jealousy, and so significant the deed that I had done, that I had the impulse to bow down to her hand and to say, 'Forgive me,' but I had not the courage.

"She remained silent, closing her eyes, evidently too weak to speak further.

"Then her mutilated face was distorted with a frown. She feebly pushed me away.

"'Why has all this taken place, why?'

"'Forgive me,' I cried.

"'Forgive? What nonsense! .... If only I had not to die!' she cried, raising herself up, and her deliriously flashing eyes were fastened on me.

"'Yes, you have wreaked your will. I hate you. Ay! Oh,' she screamed, evidently out of her head, evidently afraid of something. 'Shoot, I am not afraid. .... Only kill us all. .... He has gone. .... He has gone.'

"The delirium continued to the very end. She did not recognize any one. On the same day at noon she died. Before that, at eight o'clock in the morning, I was arrested and taken to prison. And there, while I was confined for eleven months waiting for my trial, I had a chance to meditate on myself and my past life, and I came to understand it. On the third day I began to comprehend. On the third day they took me *there*."

He wanted to say something more, but not having the strength to hold back his sobs, he paused. Collecting his strength, he continued: —

"I began to comprehend only when I beheld her in her coffin." He sobbed, but immediately continued hastily: —

"Only when I beheld her dead face did I understand what I had done. I comprehended that I, *I* had killed her, that it was through me that she, who had been living, moving, warm, was now motionless, wax-like, and cold, and that there was no way of ever again making it right, — never, never again. He who has not lived

through this cannot comprehend, U! U! U!" he cried several times, and said no more.

We sat a long time in silence. He sobbed and trembled before me. His face became pinched and long, and his mouth widened to its fullest extent.

"Yes," he said suddenly, "if I had known what I know now, then everything would have been entirely different. I would not have married her for .... I would not have married at all."

Again we were long silent.

"Well, good-by — Prostite."

He turned from me and lay down on the seat, covering himself with his plaid.

At the station where I was to leave the train — it was eight o'clock in the morning — I went up to him to bid him farewell. Either he was asleep or was pretending to be sleeping; he did not move. I touched his hand. He uncovered himself, and it was plain that he had not been asleep.

"Proshchaïte — Farewell," said I, offering him my hand. He took it and almost smiled, but so piteously that I felt like weeping.

"Yes, good-by — Prostite," said he, repeating the very word with which he had closed his tale.

SEQUEL TO THE KREUTZER SONATA

WITH reference to the subject treated of in my story, "The Kreutzer Sonata," I have received, and am still receiving, many letters from strangers who ask me to explain my opinion clearly and simply. I will do my best to meet their wish, *i.e.* briefly to express the essence of what I wished that story to convey, and the conclusions which may, I think, be drawn from it.

* * * * * *

First. I wished to say that a firm conviction (supported by false science) has established itself among all classes of our society, to the effect that sexual intercourse is necessary for health, and that marriage not being always possible, sexual intercourse without marriage, and binding the man to nothing beyond a mere money payment, is quite natural and a thing to be encouraged. This conviction has become so general and so firm that parents, acting on the advice of doctors, arrange opportunities of vice for their children, and governments (which should not exist unless they care for the moral well-being of their citizens) organize vice. That is to say, they organize a whole class of women who have to perish body and soul to satisfy the alleged needs of men. And unmarried people addict themselves to vice with quiet consciences.

And I wished to say that this is wrong. It cannot be necessary to destroy some people, body and soul, for the health of others, any more than it can be necessary for some people to drink the blood of others in order to be healthy.

The deduction which seems to me naturally to follow from the above, is that we should not yield to this error and fraud. And in order not to yield, it is necessary, first of all, not to give credence to immoral doctrines, no matter on what pseudo-sciences they may rest for support. Secondly, we must realize that it is a breach of the simplest demands of morality to enter into sexual intercourse in which people either free themselves from the possible consequences of the act, *i.e.* from the children who may be born, or leave the whole burden to the mother, or take precautions to prevent the birth of children. It is a meanness, and young people who do not wish to be mean should not do it.

To be able to abstain they should lead a natural life: not drink, nor eat meat, nor overeat, nor avoid labor — exhausting labor, not mere gymnastics, or other play. But besides this they should not, even in thought, admit the possibility of connection with strange women, any more than they would with their mothers, sisters, near relations, or with the wives of their friends. Any man can find hundreds of examples around him showing that continence is possible, and less dangerous and less harmful to health than incontinence. That is the first thing.

Second. In all classes of our society conjugal infidelity has become very common. And this is so because sexual intercourse is regarded not only as a pleasure, and as necessary to health, but as being something poetic and elevated, and a blessing to life.

And I think such conduct is wrong, and the deduction to be made is that it should not be indulged in.

And in order not to indulge in it, it is necessary that this way of regarding sexual love should be changed. Men and women should be educated at home and by public opinion, both before and after marriage, not as now to consider being in love and the sexual affection connected therewith as a poetic and elevated condition, but as being an animal condition, degrading to man. And an infringement of the marriage promise of faithfulness should be held by public opinion to be at least

as shameful as the infringement of a monetary obligation, or as a commercial fraud. And it should not be extolled in novels, verses, songs, and operas, as is now commonly done. That is the second thing.

Third. Again, as a consequence of the false importance attached to sexual love, the birth of children in our society has lost its meaning. Instead of being the object and justification of conjugal relations, it is now a hindrance to the pleasant continuation of amorous intercourse. And, therefore, both outside marriage and among married people (on the advice of the servants of medical science), the use of means to prevent the woman from conceiving children has spread, and people continue conjugal intercourse during the months when the woman is bearing and nursing the child. This used not to be done formerly, and it is not done now in the patriarchal peasant families.

And I think that such conduct is wrong.

It is bad to use means to prevent the birth of children, both because so doing frees people from the cares and troubles caused by children, which should serve to redeem sexual love, and also because it comes very near to what is most revolting to our conscience — murder. And incontinence during pregnancy and nursing is bad, because it wastes the woman's bodily, and especially her spiritual, strength.

The deduction from this is, that these things should not be done. And in order not to do them it should be understood that continence, which is a necessary condition of man's self-respect when he is unmarried, is even more necessary in the married state. That is the third thing.

Fourth. In our society children are considered either an unfortunate accident, or a hindrance to enjoyment, or (when a preconcerted number are produced) as a sort of delectation. And, in accordance with such a view, the children are not educated to face the problems of human life which await them, as beings endowed with reason and love, but they are merely treated with an eye to the enjoyment they can afford to their parents.

Consequently, human children are brought up like the young of animals; the chief care of the parents not being to prepare them for an activity worthy of men, but to feed them as well as possible, to increase their stature, and to make them clean, white, plump, and handsome. In all this, the parents are supported by the pseudo-science of medicine. And if things are done differently among the lower classes, this results merely from their lack of means. The view held is the same in all classes. And in pampered children, as in all overfed animals, an irresistible sensuality shows itself at an abnormally early age, and is the cause of terrible suffering before maturity. Apparel, reading, performances, music, dances, rich food, and all the surroundings of their life, from the pictures on boxes of sweets to novels and stories and poems, increase the sensuality; and the result is that sexual vices and diseases become customary among children of both sexes, and often retain their hold after maturity is reached.

And I think this is wrong. And the deduction to be made is, that human children should not be educated like animals, but that other things should be aimed at in the bringing up of children besides a handsome, pampered body. That is the fourth thing.

Fifth. In our society, where the falling in love of young men and women, which after all has sexual love at its root, is considered poetical and is extolled as the highest aim of human effort (as witness all the art and poetry of our society), young people devote the best time of their life, — the men to spying out, tracking, and obtaining possession of the most desirable objects of love, whether in amours or in marriage; and the women and girls to trapping and luring men into amours or marriages.

And thus people's best strength is spent in efforts that are not only unproductive, but harmful. Most of the senseless luxury of our lives results from this. From this comes the idleness of men and the shamelessness of women, who do not disdain to expose parts of their body that excite desire, in obedience to fashions admittedly borrowed from notoriously depraved women.

And I believe that this is wrong.

It is wrong because the aim — union with the object of one's love, with or without marriage, however it may be poeticized — is an aim unworthy of man, just as the aim of obtaining for oneself delicate and plentiful food is unworthy of man, though considered by many as the supreme aim of life.

The deduction to be made is, that we must cease to think that physical love is something particularly elevated. We must understand that no aim that we consider worthy of man — whether it be the service of humanity, of one's country, of science, or of art (let alone the service of God) — is ever reached by means of union with the object of one's love (whether with or without a marriage rite). On the contrary, being in love, and union with the beloved object, never makes it easier to gain any end worthy of man, but always makes it more difficult.

That is the fifth consideration.

* * * * * *

That is essentially what I wished to express, and thought I had expressed, in my story. And it seemed to me that the remedy for the evils referred to in these propositions might be discussed, but that it was impossible not to agree with the propositions themselves. This seemed to me so: first, because these propositions quite coincide with what we know of the progress of humanity, which is always proceeding from dissoluteness toward more and more of chastity, and coincide also with the moral consciousness of society, — with our consciences, which always condemn dissoluteness and esteem chastity. Secondly, because these propositions are nothing more than inevitable deductions from the teaching of the Gospels, which we profess, or at least (even if unconsciously) acknowledge to be the basis of our conceptions of morality.

But I was mistaken.

No one, indeed, directly contradicted the positions that it is wrong to be vicious, either before marriage or after a marriage ceremony, that it is wrong artificially

to prevent childbirth, that children should not be made playthings of, and that amorous union should not be placed above all other considerations. In brief, no one denied that chastity is better than dissoluteness. But people say: "If it is better not to marry, evidently we should do what is better. But if all men do so, the human race will cease, and it cannot be an ideal for humanity to destroy itself." The extinction of the race, however, is not a new idea. It is an article of faith among religious people, and to scientists it is an inevitable deduction from observation of the cooling of the sun. Leaving all that aside, however, the above rejoinder rests on a great, widely diffused, and ancient misunderstanding. It is said: "If people act up to the ideal of complete chastity, they will be exterminated; therefore, the ideal is false." But, intentionally or unintentionally, those who say this confuse two different things — a precept and an ideal.

Chastity is not a precept, or a rule, but an ideal. And an ideal is only then an *ideal*, when its accomplishment is possible only in *idea*, in thought; and when it appears attainable only in infinity, when, therefore, the possibility of approaching it is endless. If the ideal could be attained now, or if we could even imagine its accomplishment, it would cease to be an ideal.

Such is Christ's ideal — the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth; an ideal already foretold by the prophets who spoke of a time when all men shall be taught of God, and shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning-hooks; when the lions shall lie down with the lambs, and all beings shall be united by love. The whole meaning of man's life lies in progress toward that ideal. And, therefore, the striving toward the Christian ideal in its entirety, and toward chastity as one of its conditions, is far from rendering life impossible. On the contrary, the absence of this ideal would destroy progress and thus render real life impossible.

The argument that the human race will cease if men strive resolutely toward chastity, is like the argument

sometimes adduced, that the human race will perish if men strive resolutely to learn to love their friends, their enemies, and all that lives, instead of continuing the struggle for existence. Such arguments proceed from not understanding that there are two different methods of moral guidance. As there are two ways of directing a traveler, so there are two ways of supplying moral guidance to a man seeking after truth. One way is to tell the man of things he will meet on his road and by which he can shape his course. The other method is merely to give him the general direction by a compass he carries. The compass always shows one immutable direction, and therefore shows him every deviation he makes from the right line.

The first method of moral guidance is to give definite external rules. Certain actions are defined, and man is told that he should, or should not, perform them.

"Observe the Sabbath," "Be circumcised," "Do not steal," "Do not drink intoxicants," "Do not take life," "Give tithes to the poor," "Wash and pray five times a day," "Be baptized," "Take communion," etc. Such are the injunctions of external religious teachings, Brahmanist, Buddhist, Mohammedan, or Jewish, and of the Church teaching, miscalled — Christian.

The other method is that of pointing out to man a perfection he cannot attain, but which he is conscious of striving toward. An ideal is pointed out, by referring to which man can always recognize the degree of his own deviation from the right course.

Love thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself! Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect! Such is Christ's teaching.

The proof of obedience to the external religious teachings lies in the concurrence of our actions with their injunctions. And such concurrence is possible.

The proof of obedience to Christ's teaching lies in a consciousness of our falling short of ideal perfection.

The degree of advance is not seen, but the divergence from perfection is seen.

A man professing an external law is a man standing in the light of a lamp fixed to a post. He stands in the light and sees clearly, but has nowhere to advance to. A man following Christ's teaching is like a man carrying a lantern before him at the end of a pole. The light is ever before him, and ever impels him to follow it, by continually lighting up fresh ground and attracting him onward.

The Pharisee thanks God that he has done his whole duty. The rich young man has also done all from his youth upward, and does not understand what he yet lacks. Nor can they think otherwise. There is nothing before them toward which they might press on. Tithes are paid; Sabbaths observed; parents honored; adultery, theft, murder, avoided. What more? For the follower of Christ's teaching, the attainment of each step toward perfection evokes the need of reaching a still higher step, whence another, higher yet, is revealed, and so on without end. The follower of Christ's law is always in the position of the publican. He is always conscious of his imperfections, not looking back at the road he has already traveled, but always seeing before him the road he has still to go, — over which he has not yet journeyed.

Therein Christ's teaching differs from all other religious teachings. It is not that the demands are different, but the manner of guiding people is different.

Christ did not legislate. He never established any institutions, and never instituted marriage. But men, accustomed to external teachings, and not understanding the nature of Christ's teaching, wished to feel themselves justified, as the Pharisee felt himself justified. And, in contradiction to the whole spirit of Christ's teaching, they concocted, out of its letter, an external code of rules called Church Doctrine, and supplanted Christ's true teaching of the ideal by this doctrine.

In relation to all the occurrences of life, the Church doctrine (calling itself Christian) supplied, instead of

Christ's ideal teaching, definitions and rules contrary to the spirit of that teaching. This has been done with reference to government, law, the army, the Church, Church services, and it has been done in regard to marriage. Although Christ not only never instituted marriage, but, if we must seek for external regulations, rather repudiated it ("leave thy wife and follow me"), the Church doctrine (professing to be Christian) has established marriage as a Christian institution. That is to say, it has defined certain external conditions under which sexual love is said to be quite innocent and right for a Christian.

But as in Christ's teaching there is no basis for the institution of marriage, it has resulted that people in our world have left one bank but have not reached the other. That is to say, they do not really believe in the Church definition of marriage, for they feel that such an institution has no basis in Christian teaching; but yet they do not discern Christ's ideal of complete chastity which the Church teaching hides, and they are thus left without guidance in sexual matters. And this explains the seemingly strange fact that among Jews, Mohammedans, Lamaists, and others, following religious teachings of a far lower grade than the Christian, but having exact external definitions of marriage, the family basis and conjugal fidelity is far more firmly established than in so-called Christian society.

Those people have a definite system of concubinage and polygamy and polyandry confined within certain limits. Among us complete dissoluteness exists: concubinage, polygamy, and polyandry confined by no limits and screened under the forms of monogamy.

Merely because the clergy, for money, perform a certain ceremony (called the marriage service) over some of those who come together, it is naïvely, or hypocritically, supposed that we are a monogamous people.

Christian marriage never existed or could exist, any more than Christian worship,[1] or Christian teachers and

[1] (Matt. vi. 5–12.) And when you pray be not like the hypocrites, who always pray in congregations, and stop at street-corners to pray, that they

fathers of the Church,[1] or Christian property, on Christian armies, or law courts, or governments. And this was understood by Christians of the first centuries.

The Christian's ideal is love to God and to his neighbor. It is renunciation of self for the service of God and man. But carnal love, marriage, is a serving of self, and is, therefore, at least a hindrance to the service of God and man, and consequently, from the Christian point of view, it is a fall, a sin.

Getting married cannot conduce to the service of God and man, even if the object of the marriage be the continuation of the human race. It is much simpler for people, instead of getting married to produce future children, to save and support those millions of children who are perishing around us for want of food for body and soul. A Christian could only get married without consciousness of a fall into sin, if he knew that all existing children were already provided for.

It is possible to reject Christ's teaching, that teaching which impregnates our whole life, and on which all our morality is based, but if we accept it, it is impossible not to recognize that it points to the ideal of complete chastity.

In the Gospels it is said plainly, and so that it cannot be explained away: first, that a husband should not

may be noticed by men. You see yourselves, that they have their reward. But thou, if thou prayest, go into thy closet, shut the door, and pray to the Father. And thy Father will see into thy soul and will repay thee. In praying do not babble with thy tongue, like play-actors, who expect their babbling to be heard. Be not as they, for your Father knows your needs before you open your mouth. And therefore, pray thus : Our Father, etc.

(John iv. 21–24.) Woman, believe me, the time is near, when you shall worship the father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You do not know whom you worship, but we worship him whom we know. But the time is near, and is now come, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and by deeds, for the Father requires such worshipers. God is a spirit and must be worshiped in spirit and by deeds.*

[1] (Matt. xxiii. 8–10.) And be not called teachers, for you have one teacher, Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man on earth father, for you have one Father in heaven. And be not called masters, for you have one pastor, Christ.

* The text of the verses referred to I take from Tolstoï's translation of the Four Gospels harmonized and translated. — (Tr.)

divorce his wife in order to take another,[1] but should live with her to whom he has united himself. Secondly, that it is sinful for any one (consequently for a married as well as for an unmarried man) to look on a woman as an object of pleasure.[2] And thirdly, that it is better for the unmarried not to marry at all, *i.e.* to be perfectly chaste.[3]

To very many people these thoughts will seem strange and even contradictory. And they are indeed contradictory, though not among themselves. The contradiction is to the whole tenor of our lives, and involuntarily a doubt arises: which is right? these thoughts, or the lives of millions of people including my own? This feeling I myself experienced intensely, when I was arriving at the convictions I am now expressing. I never expected that the trend of my thoughts would lead me to such a result as they actually brought me to. I was frightened at my own conclusions, and wished not to believe them, but there was no way to avoid them. And, however these conclusions may contradict the whole tenor of our lives, however much they contradict what I formerly thought and even expressed, I had to accept them.

"But all these are general considerations which may be correct, but which refer to Christ's teachings, and are binding only on those who profess that teaching. But

[1] (Matt. v. 31, 32.) It was also said: Whoever puts away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement. But I say to you, that if any one put away his wife, not only is he guilty of wantonness, but he leads her to adultery. And he who marries a divorced woman commits adultery. (Matt. xix. 8.) He said to them: Moses on account of your coarseness let you divorce from your wives: but from the commencement this is not right.

[2] (Matt. v. 28, 29.) And every one who looks on a woman with desire, has done what is the same as committing adultery with her. If thine eye ensnare thee, tear it out and cast it from thee: for it is more profitable for thee to lose one eye than that the whole of you should burn.

[3] (Matt. xix. 10–12.) And his disciples said to him: If a man's duty to his wife be such, it is better not to marry. And he said to them: Not all can comprehend this in their hearts, but only those to whom it is given. For there are people who are virgin from lust from their mother's womb; and there are some who have been deprived of their desire by men, and there are some who have become pure for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to take this understanding into his heart, let him take it.

life is life, and it will not do merely to indicate Christ's unattainable ideal ahead of us, and to leave men with nothing but that ideal, and with no definite guidance on a question so burning, so general, and which causes such tremendous misfortunes.

"A young and passionate man will be, at first, attracted by the ideal, but will fail to hold to it and will stumble. And not knowing, and not professing any rules, he will fall into utter depravity."

Thus do people generally argue.

"Christ's ideal is unattainable, and therefore cannot serve to guide us in life; one may talk of it, dream of it, but it is inapplicable to life, and so we must abandon it. What we require is not an ideal, but a precept. A guidance which should correspond to our strength, and suit the average moral strength of our society; an honest Church marriage; or even a marriage not quite honest, in which one of the partners (as the men in our society) may have had intercourse with other partners; or, say, civil marriage; or even (continuing along the same road) a Japanese marriage for a term, — and why not go on till we reach the brothel?"

It is maintained to be preferable to street vice. And this is just the difficulty. Once allow yourself to lower the ideal to suit man's weakness, and there is no finding any limit at which to stop.

But the fact is that such reasoning is false from the very start. It is not true that the ideal of infinite perfection cannot be a guide in life; and that it is necessary, either to throw it up, saying that it is useless to me as I cannot reach it, or else to tone it down to a level that suits my weakness.

Such reasoning is as if a mariner were to say to himself: "Because I cannot keep to the line indicated by my compass, I will cease to look at it and will throw it overboard" (*i.e.* will reject the ideal), or else, "I will fasten the needle of the compass in the position which corresponds to the direction in which I am at present sailing" (*i.e.* will lower the ideal to suit my weakness).

The ideal of perfection given by Christ is not a fantasy, or an object for rhetorical sermons; but it is the most essential guide to moral life any man can have. It is like the compass, which is the most necessary and accessible instrument for the guidance of mariners. Only the former must be trusted as implicitly as the latter.

In whatever position a man may be, Christ's teaching of the ideal is always sufficient to furnish him with the surest guidance as to what he should — and should not — do. But he must trust that teaching completely, and that teaching alone, ceasing to follow any other, just as the steersman must trust to the compass and desist from watching what is on either hand, and from guiding himself by such observations.

To guide oneself by Christ's teachings, or by the compass, one must know how to make use of them. To this end it is above all necessary to be conscious of one's position. We must not be afraid to define precisely how far we have deviated from the line of perfection. There is no position in which man can say that he has reached it, and has nothing more to strive toward.

Such is the case concerning man's efforts to reach the Christian ideal in general, and the same is true about chastity in particular. If we imagine to ourselves people in the most diverse positions, with reference to the sex-question, from innocent childhood to marriage of an incontinent character, Christ's teaching, and the ideal he has shown us, will always, at each step between the two, supply clear and definite guidance as to what should, or should not, be done.

What should a pure lad or girl do? Keep themselves pure and free from temptation in order to devote their full powers to the service of God and man, strive after complete chastity in thought and wish.

"What should a youth, or girl, do who has fallen into temptation and is engrossed by vague desire, or by love of some one, and who has thus lost some part of their capacity to serve God and man?"

Exactly the same. Not yield to sin (knowing that

yielding will not free them from temptation, but will only increase it); and strive ever toward more and more of chastity, in order to be able more completely to serve God and man.

"What are those to do who have failed in the struggle and have fallen?"

Consider their fall not as a legitimate pleasure (as it is now regarded when justified by a marriage ceremony), nor as a casual pleasure which may be repeated with others, nor as a misfortune, when the fall has occurred with an inferior and without a ceremony; but consider the first fall as the only one, as an entry into actual and indissoluble marriage.

This entry into marriage, by the consequent birth of children, restricts those who are thus united to a new and more limited form of service to God and man. Before marriage they were free to serve God and man directly and in most varied ways. Marriage narrows their scope of action, and demands from them the rearing and educating of offspring, who may serve God and man in the future.

"What should a man and woman do who are married, and who, in accordance with that position, are performing this limited service of God and man, by rearing and educating children?"

Again the same thing. Together strive to be free from temptation. Try to cleanse themselves from the sin of their mutual relation, which hinders general and individual service of God and man; and seek to replace sexual love by the pure relationship of brother and sister.

And so it is not true that we cannot be guided by Christ's ideal, because of its being too lofty, complete, and unattainable.

If we cannot make use of it, this is only because we lie to ourselves and deceive ourselves. For if we say that we must have some rule more practicable than Christ's ideal, or else not reaching Christ's ideal, we shall become vicious, — we do not really say that Christ's ideal is too high for us, but merely that we do not believe in it, and do not want to define our actions by it.

To say that when once we have fallen, we shall have begun a loose life, is merely to state that we have decided beforehand that to fall with one who is a social inferior is not a sin, but only an amusement, a distraction, which need not be remedied by the permanent union of marriage. Whereas, if we understood that such a fall is indeed a sin, which must and can be redeemed only by indissoluble marriage, and by all the activity resulting from the birth of children in marriage, then the fall would certainly not be the cause of our plunging into vice.

To act otherwise would be as if a husbandman learning to sow were to abandon a field he had sown badly, and go on sowing a second and a third field, and were to take into account only the one field which succeeded. Evidently such a man would waste much land and seed, and would not learn to sow properly.

Keep but in view the ideal of chastity, and consider every fall (no matter whose or with whom) as the one, immutable lifelong marriage, and it will be clear that the guidance given by Christ is not only sufficient, but is the only guidance possible.

It is said, "Man is weak, and more should not be demanded of him than he can accomplish." But this is like saying, "My hand is weak, I cannot draw the straight line I wish to, therefore, to make it easier, I will take a crooked or broken line as my model." Really, the weaker my hand, the more am I in need of a perfect model.

It is impossible, having heard Christ's ideal teaching, to act as if we knew it not, and to replace it by external ordinances. Christ's ideal teaching is before humanity now just because it is suitable for our guidance in man's present stage of development. Humanity has outgrown the period of external religious ordinances — they are no longer believed in.

The Christian teaching of the ideal is the only one that can guide humanity. We neither can nor may replace Christ's ideal by external rules; but we must firmly keep this ideal before us in all its purity, and above all, we must trust it.

While the mariner sailed near the shore it was possible to say to him, "Keep to that cliff, cape, or tower." But a time comes when the ship is far from shore, and it should and can be guided only by the unattainable star and the compass indicating a direction.

And both are given us.

THE DEKABRISTS[1]

A ROMANCE

FIRST FRAGMENT

I

IT happened not long ago, in the reign of the Emperor Alexander II., — in our epoch of civilization, of progress, of *questions*, of the regeneration of Russia, etc., — the time when the victorious Russian army had returned from Sevastopol, which had just been surrendered to the enemy, when all Russia was celebrating its triumph in the destruction of the Black Sea fleet, and White-walled Moscow had gone forth to meet and congratulate the remains of the crews of that fleet, and reach them a good Russian glass of vodka, and in accordance with the good Russian custom offer them the bread and salt of hospitality,[2] and bow their

[1] The three chapters of the romance here printed under the name of the "Dekabristui" were written even before the author had begun "War and Peace." At this time he was planning a story, the principal characters of which were to be the conspirators who planned the December Insurrection; but he did not go on with it because, in his efforts at bringing to life the time of the Dekabrists, he involuntarily went back in thought to the preceding time period, to the past of his heroes. Gradually before the author opened ever deeper and deeper the sources of those phenomena which he was designing to describe: the families, the education, the social conditions, etc., of his chosen characters. At last he paused at the time of the war with Napoleon, which he described in "War and Peace." At the end of that romance are evident the symptoms of that awakening which was reflected in the events of December 27, 1825.

Afterward the author once more took up "The Dekabrists," and wrote two other beginnings, which are here printed.

Such was the origin of the fragments here presented; it is probable that it will never be finished. — PUBLISHERS' NOTE.

[2] *Khlyeb-sol.*

heads to the ground; at the time when Russia in the person of perspicacious virgin-politicians bewailed the destruction of its favorite dreams about celebrating the Te Deum in the cathedral of Saint Sophia and the severely felt loss of two great men dear to the fatherland, who had been killed during the war (one carried away by his desire to hear the Te Deum as soon as possible in the said cathedral and who fell on the plains of Vallachia, for that very reason leaving two squadrons of hussars on those same plains; the other an invaluable man distributing tea, other people's money, and sheets to the wounded, and not stealing either); at the time when from all sides, from all branches of human activity, in Russia, great men sprang up like mushrooms — colonels, administrators, economists, writers, orators, and simply great men, without any vocation or object; at the time when at the jubilee of a Moscow actor, public sentiment, strengthened by a toast, began to demand the punishment of all criminals; when formidable committees from Petersburg were galloping away toward the south, to apprehend, discover, and punish the evil-doers of the commissary department; when in all the cities, dinners with speeches were given to the heroes of Sevastopol, and these men who came with amputated arms and legs were given trifles as remembrances, and they were met on bridges and highways; at the time when oratorical talents were so rapidly spreading among the people that a single tapster everywhere and on every occasion wrote and printed, and, having learned by heart, made at dinners such powerful addresses that the keepers of order had, as a general thing, to employ repressive measures against the eloquence of the tapster; when in the English club itself they reserved a special room for the discussion of public affairs; when new periodicals made their appearance under the most diversified appellations — journals developing European principles on a European soil, but with a Russian point of view, and journals exclusively on Russian soil developing Russian principles, but with a European point of view; when suddenly

so many periodicals appeared that it seemed as if all names were exhausted — the *Viestnik* (Messenger), and the *Slovo* (Word), and the *Besyeda* (Discussion), and the *Nabliudatyel* (Spectator), and the *Zvezda* (Star), and the *Orel* (Eagle), and many others — and notwithstanding this, new ones and ever new ones kept appearing; a time when pleiads of writers and thinkers kept appearing, proving that science is popular, and is not popular, and is unpopular, and the like, and a pleiad of writer-artists, describing the grove and the sunrise and the thunder-storm and the love of the Russian maiden and the laziness of a single chinovnik and the bad behavior of many other functionaries; at the time when from all sides came up *questions* — as in 1856 they called all those currents of circumstances to which no one could obtain a categorical answer — questions of military schools,[1] of universities, of the censorship, of verbal law-proceedings relating to finance, banks, police, emancipation, and many others, and all were trying to raise still new questions, all were giving experimental answers to them, were writing, reading, talking, arranging projects, all the time wishing to correct, to annihilate, to change, and all the Russians, as one man, found themselves in indescribable enthusiasm, — a state of things which has been witnessed twice in Russia during the nineteenth century — the first time when in 1812 we thrashed Napoleon I., and the second time when in 1856 Napoleon III. thrashed us — great and never-to-be-forgotten epoch of the regeneration of the Russian people. Like that Frenchman, who said that no one had ever lived at all who had not lived during the great French Revolution, so I also do not hesitate to say that any one who was not living in Russia in the year '56 does not know what life is.

He who writes these lines not only lived at that time, but was actively at work then. Moreover, he himself stayed in one of the trenches before Sevastopol for several weeks. He wrote about the Crimean war a work which brought him great fame, and in this he clearly and circumstantially described how the soldiers fired their

[1] *Voprosui kadetskikh korpusof.*

guns from the bastions, how wounds were bandaged at the ambulance stations, and how the dead were buried in the graveyard. Having accomplished these exploits, the writer of these lines spent some time at the heart of the empire, in a rocket establishment, where he received his laurels for his exploits. He saw the enthusiasm of both capitals and of the whole people, and he experienced in himself how Russia was able to reward genuine service. The powerful ones of that world all sought his acquaintance, shook hands with him, gave him dinners, kept inviting him out, and, in order to elicit from him the particulars of the war, told him their own sentiments. Consequently the writer of these lines may well appreciate that great unforgetable epoch.

But that does not concern us now.

One evening about this time two conveyances and a sledge were standing at the entrance of the best hotel in Moscow. A young man was just going in to inquire about rooms. An old man was sitting in one of the carriages with two ladies, and was discussing about the Kuznetsky Bridge at the time of the French Invasion.

It was the continuation of a conversation which had been begun on their first arrival at Moscow, and now the old, white-bearded man, with his fur shuba thrown open, was calmly going on with it, still sitting in the carriage, as if he intended to spend the night there. His wife and daughter listened to him, but kept looking at the door, not without impatience. The young man came out again accompanied by the Swiss and the hall-boy.

"Well, how is it, Sergyeĭ?" asked the mother, looking out so that the lamplight fell on her weary face.

Either because it was his usual custom, or to prevent the Swiss from mistaking him for a lackey, as he was dressed in a half-shuba, Sergyeĭ replied in French that they could have rooms, and he opened the carriage door. The old man for an instant glanced at his son, and fell back once more into the dark depths of the carriage, as if this affair did not concern him at all.

"There was no theater then."

"Pierre," said his wife, pulling him by the cloak, but he continued:—

"Madame Chalmé was on the Tverskaya...."

From the depths of the carriage rang out a young, merry laugh.

"Papa, come,—you are talking nonsense."

The old man seemed at last to realize that they had reached their destination, and he looked round.

"Come, step out."

He pulled his hat over his eyes and obediently got out of the carriage. The Swiss offered him his arm, but, convinced that the old man was perfectly able to take care of himself, he immediately proffered his services to the elder lady.

Natalya Nikolayevna, the lady, by her sable cloak, and by the slowness of her motions in getting out, and by the way in which she leaned heavily on his arm, and by the way in which, without hesitation, she immediately took her son's arm and walked up the steps, impressed the man as a woman of great distinction. He could not distinguish the young woman from the maids that dismounted from the second carriage; she, just as they, carried a bundle and a pipe, and walked behind. Only by her laughing, and the fact that she called the old man "father," did he know it.

"Not that way, papa, turn to the right," said she, detaining him by the sleeve of his coat. "To the right."

And on the stairway, above the stamping of feet, the opening of doors, and the panting of the elderly lady, was heard the same laughter which had rung out in the carriage, and which any one hearing would have surely exclaimed: "What a jolly laugh! I wish I could laugh like that."

The son, Sergyeï, had been busied with all the material conditions on the way; and, while busied with them, made up for his lack of knowledge by the energy characteristic of his five and twenty years and his bustling activity, which filled him with satisfaction. Twenty times, at least, and apparently without any sufficient cause, dressed in but a single paletot, he had run down

to the sledge and up the steps again, shivering with the cold, and taking two or three steps at a time with his long, young legs. Natalya Nikolayevna begged him not to catch cold, but he assured her that there was no danger, and he kept giving orders, slamming doors, and going and coming; and, even after he was convinced that everything now rested on the servants and muzhiks alone, he several times made a tour of all the rooms, entering the drawing-room by one door and going out by another, trying to find something more to do.

"Tell me, papa, will you go to the bath? Do you know where it is?" he asked.

Papa was in a brown study, and seemed to be entirely unable to account for his present environment. He was slow in replying. He heard the words, but they made no impression on him. Suddenly he comprehended. "Yes, yes, yes; please find out;.... at the Kamennoï Most."

The head of the family, with quick, nervous step, crossed the room and sat down in an arm-chair.

"Well, now we must decide what is to be done, — how to get settled," said he. "Help me, children; be quick about it! Be good and take hold and get things arranged, and then to-morrow we will send Serozha with a note to sister Mary Ivanovna, to Nikitin, or we will go ourselves. How is that, Natasha? But now let us get settled."

"To-morrow is Sunday; I hope that you will go to service first, before you do anything else, Pierre," said his wife, who was kneeling before a trunk and opening it.

"Oh, it is Sunday, is it? Assuredly; we will go to the Uspyensky Cathedral. That will note the beginning of our return. My God! when I recall the last time I was in the Uspyensky Cathedral.... do you remember, Natasha? But that is not the matter in hand."

And the head of the family leaped up from the chair in which he had only just sat down.

"But now we must get established."

Yet, without doing anything to help, he walked from one room into the other. "Tell me, will you drink some tea? Or are you tired, and would you rather rest?"

"Yes, yes," replied his wife, taking something from the trunk, "but I thought you were going to the bath."

"Yes .... in my day it used to be on the Kamennoï Most. Serozha, just go and find out if the baths are still at the Kamennoï Most. — Here, Serozha and I will take this room. Serozha, do you like this one?"

But Serozha had already gone to find out about the baths. "No," the old man went on to say, "that won't do at all. You won't have a passage directly into the drawing-room. What do you think about it, Natasha?"

"Don't you worry, Pierre, everything will be arranged," replied Natasha from the next room, into which the muzhiks were carrying various articles. But Pierre had come under the influence of the excitement and enthusiasm caused by his return.

"See here, don't disturb Serozha's things; there, they 've brought his snow-shoes into the drawing-room." And he himself picked them up, and with extraordinary carefulness, as if the whole future order of their establishment depended on it, placed them against the lintel of the door, and pressed them close to it. But the shoes would not stay put, and as soon as Pierre had left them they fell with a crash across the door. Natalya Nikolayevna frowned and shuddered, but, when she saw the cause of the disturbance, she said: —

"Sonya, pick them up, my love."

"Pick them up, my love," echoed her husband. "And I am going to see the landlord. Don't make any changes in our arrangements. We must talk it all over with him first."

"Better send for him, Pierre. Why do you disturb yourself?"

Pierre acquiesced in this.

"Sonya, do you attend to this, please. .... M. Cavalier; tell him that we want to talk things over with him."

"Chevalier, papa," said Sonya, and she started to go.

Natalya Nikolayevna, who was giving orders in a low

voice, and moving about quietly from room to room, now with a drawer, now with a pipe, now with a cushion, gradually and imperceptibly reducing the heaps of articles into order, and getting everything into its place, remarked, as she passed Sonya: —

"Don't go yourself; send a servant."

While the man was gone after the landlord, Pierre employed his spare moments, under the pretext of assisting his wife, in rumpling up some of her gowns, and then he tumbled over a half-emptied trunk. Catching by the wall to keep from falling, the Dekabrist looked round with a smile. His wife, it seemed, was too busy to notice; but Sonya looked at him with such mischievous eyes that it seemed as if she were asking his permission to laugh out loud. He readily gave her that permission, and laughed himself with such a hearty laugh that all who were in the room, his wife as well as the maid-servant and the muzhik, joined in.

This laughter still more cheered up the old man; he discovered that the divan in the room taken by his wife and daughter was placed inconveniently for them, notwithstanding the fact that they assured him to the contrary and begged him not to trouble himself. Just as he, with the assistance of the muzhik, was trying to move it to another place, the French landlord entered the room.

"You asked for me?" asked the landlord, curtly; and, as a proof of his indifference, if not his disdain, he deliberately took out his handkerchief, deliberately unfolded it, and deliberately blew his nose.

"Yes, my dear friend," said Piotr Ivanovitch, approaching him. "You see, we ourselves do not know how long we shall be here, my wife and I." And Piotr Ivanovitch, who had the weakness of seeing an intimate in every man, began to tell him his circumstances and plans.

Mr. Chevalier did not share this way of men, and was not interested in the particulars communicated by Piotr Ivanovitch; but the excellent French which the Dekabrist spoke, — a French which, as every one knows, has

something of the nature of a patent of respectability in Russia, — and the aristocratic ways of the newcomers, caused him to have a higher opinion of them than before.

"In what way can I aid you?" he asked.

This question did not embarrass Piotr Ivanovitch. He expressed his desire to have rooms, tea, a samovar, luncheon, dinner, food for his servants, — in a word, all those things for which hotels are intended to provide; and when Mr. Chevalier, amazed at the innocence of the old man, who, it may be surmised, thought that he had reached the Trukhmensky steppe, or that all these things were to be furnished as a free gift, explained that his desires would be fully gratified, Piotr Ivanovitch reached the height of enthusiasm.

"There, that is excellent! very good! Then we will arrange it so. Now; how then, please...."

But he began to feel ashamed of talking about himself exclusively, and so he proceeded to ask Mr. Chevalier about his family and affairs.

Sergyeï Petrovitch, returning, showed evident signs of dissatisfaction at his father's behavior. He noticed the landlord's irritation, and he reminded his father of the bath. But Piotr Ivanovitch was greatly interested in the question how a French hotel could succeed in Moscow in 1856, and how Madame Chevalier spent her time. At last the landlord bowed, and asked if there was anything they wished to order.

"Will you have some tea, Natasia. Yes? Tea, then, if you please, and we will have another talk, *mon cher monsieur!* — What a splendid man!"

"But are you going to the bath, papa?"

"Oh, then we don't need any tea."

Thus the only result of the conference with the newcomers was snatched away from the landlord.

Accordingly Piotr Ivanovitch was now proud and happy with the arrangements that he had made. The drivers who came to get their vodka-money annoyed him because Serozha had no small change, and Piotr Ivanovitch was about to send for the landlord again, when the

happy thought occurred to him that he ought not to be the only gay one that evening, and restored him to his good humor. He took out two three-ruble notes, and, pressing one into the hand of one of the drivers, said, "This is for you," — Piotr Ivanovitch had the custom of addressing all persons without exception, save the members of his own family, with the formal second person, plural, *vui* — "and this is for you," said he, thrusting the bank-note into the man's palm, somewhat as men do when they pay a doctor for his visit. After all these matters had been attended to, he went to his bath.

Sonya sat down on the divan, and, supporting her head on her hand, laughed heartily.

"Oh, how good it is, mamma; oh, how good it is!"

Then she put up her feet on the divan, stretched herself out, lay back, and thus fell asleep, with the sound, silent sleep of a girl of eighteen after a journey which had lasted a month and a half.

Natalya Nikolayevna, who was still busy in her sleeping-room, apparently heard with her maternal ear that Sonya was not stirring, and went in to see for herself. She took a cushion, and with her large white hand, raising the girl's rosy head, laid it gently on the cushion. Sonya sighed deeply, settled her shoulders, and let her head rest on the pillow, not saying "*merci*," but taking it as a matter of course.

"Not there, not there, Gavrilovna, Katya," said Natalya Nikolayena, addressing the two maid-servants who were making a bed; and with one hand, as it were in passing, smoothing her daughter's disordered locks. Without delaying, and without haste, Natalya Nikolayevna put things in order, and by the time her husband and son returned everything was in readiness, — the trunks were removed from the rooms; in Pierre's sleeping-room everything was just as it had been for years and years at Irkutsk; his khalat, his pipe, his tobacco-box, his *eau sucré*, the Gospels which he read at night, and even a little image fastened in some way above the beds, to the luxurious wall-hangings of the rooms of Chevalier, who did not employ this form of adornment, though that eve-

ning they made their appearance in all the rooms of the third suite of the hotel.

Natalya Nikolayevna, having got things arranged to rights, put on her collar and cuffs, which in spite of the long journey she had kept clean, brushed her hair, and sat down opposite the table. Her beautiful black eyes had a far-away look; she gazed, and rested!

It would seem that she rested, not from the labor of getting settled only, not from the journey only, not from her weary years only; she rested, it seemed, from her whole life; and the far distance into which she gazed, where in imagination she saw the living faces of dear ones, that was the rest for which she sighed. Whether it was the exploit of love which she had performed for her husband's sake, or the love which she had felt for her children when they were small, whether it was her heavy loss, or the peculiarity of her character, any one, looking at this woman, must have certainly comprehended that nothing more from her was to be expected, that she had already, and long ago, given herself to life, and that nothing remained for her. There remained a certain beautiful and melancholy dignity of worth, like old memories, like moonlight. It was impossible to imagine her otherwise than surrounded by reverence and all the amenities of life. That she should ever be hungry and eat ravenously, or that she should ever wear soiled linen, that she should ever stumble or forget to blow her nose, was utterly unthinkable. It was a physical impossibility! Why this was so, I do not know; but her every motion was majesty, grace, sympathy for all those that enjoyed the sight of her.

> "*Sie pflegen und weben*
> *Himmlische Rosen ins irdische Leben.*"

She knew that couplet and liked it, but she was not guided by it. Her whole nature was the expression of this thought; her whole life unconsciously devoted to the weaving of invisible roses into the lives of those with whom she came into contact. She accompanied her hus-

band to Siberia purely because she loved him; she did what she might do for him, and she involuntarily did everything for him. She made his bed for him, she packed his things, she prepared his dinner and tea for him, and above all, she was always where he was, and greater happiness no woman could give her husband.

In the drawing-room the samovar was singing on the round table. Before it sat Natalya Nikolayevna. Sonya was wrinkling up her forehead and smiling under her mother's hand, which tickled her, when with trimmed finger-tips and shining cheeks and brows, — the father's bald spot was especially brilliant, — fresh clean linen and dark hair and beaming faces, the men came into the room.

"It has grown lighter since you have come in," said Natalya Nikolayevna. "Ye powers,[1] how white."

For years she had said this every Saturday, and every Saturday Pierre had experienced a sense of modesty and satisfaction. They sat down at the table; there was a smell of tea and tobacco, the voices of the parents and the children were heard, and of the servants who in the same room were carrying away the cups. They recalled the amusing things which had happened on the road, they praised Sonya's mode of dressing her hair, they chatted and laughed. Geographically they had all been transported five thousand versts into an entirely different and alien environment, but morally they were that evening still at home, just the same as their peculiar lonely family life had made them. Of this there was to be no morrow. Piotr Ivanovitch sat down near the samovar and smoked his pipe. He was not gay at all.

"Well, here we are back again," said he, "and I am glad that we shall not see any one this evening; this evening will be the last that we shall spend together as a family;" and he drank these words down with a great swallow of tea.

"Why the last, Pierre?"

"Why? Because the young eagles have been taught to fly; they will have to be building their own nests, and so they will be flying off each in his own direction." ....

[1] *Batyushka.*

"How absurd," exclaimed Sonya, taking his glass from him, and smiling as she smiled at everything. "The old nest is good enough."

"The old nest is a wretched nest; the father-eagle could not build it; he got into a cage; his young ones were hatched in the cage and he was let out only when his wings were no longer able to bear him aloft. No, the young eagles will have to build their nests higher, more successfully, nearer to the sun. They are his young, in order that his example may aid them; but the old eagle, as long as he has his eyes, will look out for them, and if he becomes blind will listen for them .... give me a little rum, more, more .... there, that will do!"

"Let us see who will leave the others first," remarked Sonya, giving her mother a fleeting glance, as if she reproached herself for speaking before her. "Let us see who will leave the others first," she repeated. "I have no fear for myself or for Serozha either."

Serozha was striding up and down the room and thinking how the next day he would order some new clothes, and trying to decide whether he would go himself or send for the tailor, and so he was not interested in the conversation between Sonya and his father.

Sonya laughed.

"What is the matter with you? What is it?" asked their father.

"You are younger than we are, papa, ever so much younger, that is a fact," said she, and again she laughed.

"How is that?" exclaimed the old man, and the gloomy frown on his brow melted away in an affectionate and, at the same time, rather scornful smile.

Natalya Nikolayevna leaned out from behind the samovar, which prevented her from seeing her husband.

"Sonya is right. You are only sixteen years old, Pierre. Serozha is younger in his feelings, but you are younger than he in spirit. I can foresee what he will do, but you are still capable of surprising me."

Whether it was that the old man recognized the justice of the remark, or being flattered by it did not know

what answer to make, he went on smoking in silence, drinking his tea, and only letting his eyes flash. But Serozha, with the egotism characteristic of youth, for the first time began to feel interested in what was said about him, joined the conversation, and assured them that he was really old, that his coming to Moscow and the new life which was opening before him did not rejoice him in the least, that he was perfectly calm in his thought and expectations of the future.

"Nevertheless this is the last evening," repeated Piotr Ivanovitch. "To-morrow it will no longer be the same."

And once more he filled up his glass with rum. And for some time longer he sat by the tea-table with an expression on his face as if he had much to say, but there was no one to listen. He kept pouring out the rum until his daughter surreptitiously carried away the bottle.

II

When Mr. Chevalier returned to his own room, after he had been up-stairs to arrange for his guests, he communicated his observations concerning the newcomers to the partner of his life, who, dressed in laces and silk, had her place in the Paris fashion behind the desk; in the same room sat several of the *habitués* of the establishment. Serozha, while he was down-stairs, had noticed that room and its occupants. You, probably, have also noticed it if ever you have been in Moscow.

If you, a modest man, not acquainted with Moscow, have arrived too late for a dinner invitation, have been mistaken in your supposition that the hospitable Muscovites will invite you to dinner and they have not invited you, or if you simply desire to dine in the best hotel, you will go into the anteroom. Three or four lackeys will dart forward; one of them will take your shuba from you and congratulate you on the new year, or the carnival, or your return, or will simply remark that it is a long time since you were there, although you may never have been at that establishment in your life. You go in, and the first thing that strikes your eyes is a covered table,

spread, as it seems to you at the first instant, with an endless collection of edibles. But this is only an optical delusion, since the larger part of the space on this table is occupied by pheasants in their feathers, indigestible lobsters, baskets with scents, and pomade and vials with cosmetics and comfits. Only if you search carefully you will find vodka and a crust of bread with butter and a piece of fish under a wire fly-screen, perfectly useless in Moscow in the month of December, but there because they are used in that way in Paris.

A little farther on, beyond the table, you will see in front of you the room in which sits the French woman behind the desk, always with a disgusting exterior, and yet with the cleanest of cuffs and in the most charming of modish gowns. Next the Frenchwoman you will see an officer with unbuttoned coat, sipping vodka and reading a newspaper, and a pair of civil or military legs stretched out in a velvet chair, and you will hear a chatter of French and more or less genuine and hearty laughter.

If you wish to find out what is going on in that room, then I should advise you not to go into it, but simply to keep your eyes open as you go by, pretending that you want to obtain a tartine. Otherwise you would be greeted with a questioning silence and with the eyes of the *habitués* of the room fixed on you, and probably you will put your tail between your legs and take refuge at one of the tables in the big "hall" or in the winter garden. There no one will disturb you. These tables are for the general public, and there in your solitude you may call the *garçon* and order truffles, as much as you please. This room with the French woman exists for the select gilded youth of Moscow, and to become one of the chosen is not so easy as it may seem to you.

Mr. Chevalier, returning to this room, told his spouse that the man from Siberia was a bore, but on the other hand his son and daughter were young people such as could be brought up only in Siberia.

"You ought to look at the daughter, what a rose she is!"

"Oh, he loves fresh young women — this old man does!" exclaimed one of the guests, who was smoking a cigar.

The conversation, of course, was carried on in French, but I translate it into Russian, as I shall do throughout this story.

"Oh, I am very fond, too, of them," replied Mr. Chevalier. "Women are my passion. Don't you believe me?"

"Hear that, Madame Chevalier," cried a stout young Cossack officer, who was deeply in the debt of the establishment and liked to chat with the landlady.

"Why, you see he shares my taste," said Chevalier, tapping the stout officer on the epaulet.

"And so the little Sibiryatchka is pretty, is she?"

Chevalier put his fingers together and kissed them.

Whereupon ensued among the occupants a very gay and confidential conversation. It concerned the stout officer; he smiled as he listened to what was said about him.

"Can he have such mutable tastes," shouted one man through the laughter. "Mademoiselle Clarisse, you know Strugof likes above all things, next to women, hens' legs."

Although Mademoiselle Clarisse, from behind her desk, did not see the wit of this remark, she broke out into laughter as silvery as her bad teeth and declining years allowed.

"Has the Siberian girl awakened such thoughts in him?" and again they all laughed harder than ever. Even Mr. Chevalier almost died with laughing, adding, "*Ce vieux coquin*," and patting the Cossack officer on the head and shoulders.

"But who are they — these Sibiryaki — manufacturers or merchants?" asked one of the gentlemen when the laughter had somewhat subsided.

"Nikit! Go and ask the gentleman who has just come for his passport," said Mr. Chevalier. "'We Alexander, Autocrat.'" ....

Chevalier was just beginning to read the passport

which was brought him, when the Cossack officer snatched the paper out of his hands, but his face suddenly expressed amazement.

"Well, now, guess who it is," said he; "all of you know him by reputation."

"How can we guess, tell us." ....

"Well, Abd-el Kader, ha, ha, ha..... Well, Cagliostro, ha, ha, ha..... Well, then, Peter III., ha, ha, ha." ....

"Well, then, read for yourselves." ....

The Cossack officer unfolded the paper and read: the former Prince Piotr Ivanovitch and one of those Russian names which every one knows and pronounces with a certain respect and pleasure when speaking of any one bearing that name, as of a personal friend or intimate.

We will call it Labazof.

The Cossack officer vaguely remembered that this Piotr Labazof was a person of some consequence in '25, and that he was sent to the mines of Siberia as a convict, but why he was famous he did not remember very well.

The others knew nothing about it, and they replied: —

"Oh, yes, famous," just exactly as they would have likewise said "Famous" of Shakespeare who wrote the "Æneid"!

The most that they knew about him was what the stout officer said, — that he was the brother of Prince Ivan, uncle of the Chikins, the Countess Prunk, yes, "famous." ....

"Why, he must be very rich if he is a brother of Prince Ivan," remarked one of the young men. "If they have restored his estates to him. They have restored their property to some."

"How many of these exiles are coming back nowadays," remarked another person present. "Truly I don't believe there were so many sent as have already returned. Yes, Zhikinsky, tell us that story about the eighteenth of the month," said he, addressing an officer of light infantry, reputed as a clever story-teller.

"Yes, tell us it."

"In the first place, it is genuine truth and happened

here, at Chevalier's, in the large 'hall.' Three Dekabrists came here to dinner. They took seats at one table, they ate, they drank, they talked. Now opposite them was sitting a man of respectable appearance, of about the same age, and he kept listening to what they had to say about Siberia: — 'And do you know Nerchinsk?' — 'Why, yes, I lived there.' — 'And do you know Tatyana Ivanovna?' — 'Why, of course I do.' — 'Permit me to ask if you were also exiled?' — 'Yes, I had to suffer that misfortune.' — 'And you?' — 'We were all sent on the 14th of December. Strange that we don't know you, if you also were among those sent on the 14th. Will you tell us your name?' — 'Feodorof.' — 'Were you also on the 14th?' — 'No, on the 18th.' — 'How on the 18th?' — '18th of September; for a gold watch; I was falsely charged with stealing it, and though I was innocent, I had to go.'"

All burst out laughing except the narrator, who with a preternaturally solemn face looked at his hearers each and all, and swore that it was a true story.

Shortly after this tale one of the gilded youths got up and went to his club. After passing through the room furnished with tables, where old men were playing cards; after turning into the "infernalnaya" where already the famous "Puchin" was beginning his game against the "assembled crowd"; after lingering awhile near one of the billiard-tables at which a little old man of distinction was making chance shots; and after glancing into the library where some general was reading sedately over his glasses, holding his newspaper far from his eyes, and where a literary young man, striving not to make a noise, was turning over the files of papers, — the gilded youth sat down on a divan in the billiard-room with another man, who like himself belonged to the same gilded youth, and was playing backgammon.

It was the luncheon day, and there were present many gentlemen who were frequenters of the club. Among the number was Ivan Pavlovitch Pakhtin. He was a man of forty, of medium height, pale complexion, stout, with

wide shoulders and hips, with a bald head, a shiny, jolly, smooth-shaven face. Though he did not play backgammon, he joined Prince D——, with whom he was on intimate terms, and he did not refuse the glass of champagne which was offered to him. He arranged himself so comfortably after his dinner, slightly smoothing the seat of his trousers, that any one would think he had been sitting there a century, smoking his cigar, sipping his champagne, and happily conscious of the nearness of princes and counts and the sons of ministers. The tidings of the return of the Labazofs disturbed his equanimity. "Where are you going, Pakhtin?" asked the son of a minister, who in the interval of his play, noticed that Pakhtin got up, pulled down his waistcoat, and drank his champagne in great swallows.

"Seviernikof invited me," said Pakhtin, feeling a certain unsteadiness in his legs, "say, are you going?"

Anastasya, Anastasya, otvoryaï-ka vorota.

This was a gipsy song that was in great vogue at the time.

"Perhaps so. And you?"

"How should I go, an old married man?"

"There now."

Pakhtin, smiling, went to find Seviernikof in the "glass room." He liked to have his last word take the form of a jest. And so it was now.

"Tell me, how is the countess's health?" he asked, as he joined Seviernikof, who did not know him at all, but, as Pakhtin conjectured, would consider it of the greatest importance to know of the Labazofs' return. Seviernikof had been himself somewhat implicated in the affair of December 14, and was a friend of the Dekabrists.

The countess's health was much better, and Pakhtin was very glad of it.

"Did you know that Labazof got back to-day, and is staying at Chevalier's?"

"What is that you say? Why, we are old friends. How glad I am. He has grown old, poor fellow. His wife wrote my wife...."

But Seviernikof did not cite what she wrote. His partner, who was playing without trumps, made some mistake. While talking with Ivan Pavlovitch, he kept his eye on them, but now suddenly he threw his whole body on the table, and, pounding on it with his hands, proved that he ought to have played a seven.

Ivan Pavlovitch got up and went to another table, joined the conversation there, and communicated to another important man his news, again got up and did the same thing at a third table. All these men of distinction were very glad to hear of Labazof's return, so that when Ivan Pavlovitch came back to the billiard-room again he no longer doubted, as he had at first, whether it was the proper thing to be glad of Labazof's return, and no longer employed any periphrasis about the ball, or the article in the *Viestnik*, or any one's health, or the weather, but broke his news at once with an enthusiastic account of the happy return of the famous Dekabrist. The little old man, who was still making vain attempts to hit the white ball with his cue, was, in Pakhtin's opinion, most likely to be rejoiced by the news. He went to him.

"You play remarkably well, your highness," said Pakhtin, just as the little old man struck his cue full in the marker's red waistcoat, signifying by this that he wished it chalked.

The title of address[1] was not spoken at all as you would suppose, with any servility, — oh, no, that would have been impossible in 1856. Ivan Pavlovitch called this old man simply by his given name and patronymic, and the title was given partly as a joke on those who did use it, and partly to let it be known that "we know with whom we are speaking, and yet we like to have a bit of sport and that is a fact;" at any rate, it was very subtile.

"I have just heard that Piotr Labazof has got back. He has arrived to-day from Siberia with his whole family."

Pakhtin uttered these words at the instant that the

[1] *Vashe vuisokoprevaskhadityelstvo.*

little old man was aiming at his ball again — this was his misfortune.

"If he has come back such a hare-brained fellow as he was when he was sent off, there is nothing to be rejoiced over," said the little old man, gruffly, provoked at his incomprehensible lack of success.

This reply disconcerted Ivan Pavlovitch; once more he did not know whether it was the proper thing to be glad of Labazof's return, and in order definitely to settle his doubts he directed his steps to the room where the men of intellect collected to talk, the men who knew the significance and object of everything, who knew everything, in one word. Ivan Pavlovitch had the same pleasant relations with the *habitués* of the "intellectual room" as he had with the gilded youth and the dignitaries. To tell the truth, he was out of his place in the "intellectual room," but no one was surprised when he entered and sat down on a divan. The talk was turning on the question in what year and on what subject a quarrel had occurred between two Russian journals. Taking advantage of a moment's silence, Ivan Pavlovitch communicated his tidings, not at all as a matter to rejoice over, nor as a matter of little account, but as if it were connected with the conversation. But immediately, by the way the "intellectuals" — I employ this word to signify the *habitués* of the "intellectual room" — received the tidings and began to discuss it, immediately Ivan Pavlovitch understood that here at least this tidings was investigated, and that here only it would take such a form as he could safely carry it further, and "*savoir à quoi s'en tenir.*"

"Labazof was the only one left," said one of the "intellectuals." "Now all of the Dekabrists who are alive have returned to Russia."

"He was one of the band of famous ...." said Pakhtin, in a still experimental tone of voice, ready to make this quotation either comic or serious.

"Undoubtedly Labazof was one of the most important men of that time," began one of the "intellectuals." "In 1819 he was ensign of the Semyonovsky regiment

and was sent abroad with despatches for Duke Z——. Then he came back, and in 1824 was admitted to the first Masonic lodge. All the Masons of that time met at D——'s and at his house. You see, he was very rich; Prince Z——, Feodore D——, Ivan P——, those were his most intimate friends. And so his uncle, Prince Vissarion, in order to remove the young man from their society, brought him to Moscow."

"Excuse me, Nikolaï Stepanovitch," interrupted another of the "intellectuals." "It seems to me that that was in 1823, because Vissarion Labazof was appointed commander of the third Corpus in 1824 and was in Warsaw. He took him on his own staff as aide, and after his dismissal brought him here. However, excuse me, I interrupted you." ....

"Oh, no, you finish the story."

"No, I beg of you."

"No, you finish; you ought to know about it better than I do, and besides, your memory and knowledge have been satisfactorily shown here."

"Well, in Moscow he resigned, contrary to his uncle's wishes," proceeded the one whose "memory and knowledge had been satisfactorily shown." "And here around him formed another society of which he was the head and heart, if one may so express oneself. He was rich, had a good intellect, was cultivated. They say he was remarkably lovable. My aunt used to say that she never knew a man more charming. And here, just before the conspiracy, he married one of the Krinskys." ....

"The daughter of Nikolaï Krinsky, the one who before Borodino .... oh, yes, the famous one," interrupted some one.

"Oh, yes. Her enormous property is his now, but his own estate, which he inherited, went to his younger brother, Prince Ivan, who is now Ober-hoff-kafermeister — that is what he called it — and was minister. Best of all was his behavior toward his brother," continued the narrator. "When he was arrested the only thing that he had time to destroy was his brother's letters and papers."

"Was his brother implicated?"

The narrator did not reply "yes," but compressed his lips and closed his eyes significantly.

"Then to all questions Piotr Labazof inflexibly denied everything that would reflect on his brother, and for this reason he was punished more severely than the others. But what is best of all is that Prince Ivan got possession of his whole property, and never sent a grosh to him."

"They say that Piotr Labazof himself renounced it," remarked one of the listeners.

"Yes, but he renounced it simply because Prince Ivan, just before the coronation, wrote him that if he did not take it they would confiscate the property, and that he had children and obligations, and that now he was not in a condition to restore anything. Piotr replied in two lines: 'Neither I nor my heirs have or wish to have any claim to the estate assigned to you by law.' And nothing further. Why should he? And Prince Ivan swallowed it down, and with rapture locked this document and various bonds into his strong-box and showed it to no one."....

One of the peculiarities of the "intellectual" room consisted in the fact that its *habitués* knew, when they wanted to know, everything that was done in the world, however much of a secret it was.

"Nevertheless it is a question," said a new speaker, "whether it would be fair to take from Prince Ivan's children the property which they have had ever since they were young, and which they supposed they had a right to."

The conversation thus took an abstract turn which did not interest Pakhtin.

He felt the necessity of finding fresh persons to communicate his tidings to, and he got up and made his way leisurely through the rooms, stopping here and there to talk. One of his fellow-members delayed him to tell him the news of the Labazofs' return.

"Who does n't know it?" replied Ivan Pavlovitch, smiling calmly as he started for the front door. The

news had gone entirely round the circle and was coming back to him again. There was nothing left for him to do at the club, so he went to a reception. It was not a formal reception, but a "salon," where every evening callers were received. There were present eight ladies and one old colonel, and all of them were awfully bored. Pakhtin's assurance of bearing and his smiling face had the effect of immediately cheering up the ladies and girls. The tidings was all the more apropos from the fact that there was present the old Countess Fuchs with her daughter. When Pakhtin repeated almost word for word all he had heard in the "intellectual" room, Madame Fuchs, shaking her head and amazed to think how old she was, began to recall how she had once ridden horseback with Natasha Krinsky before she was married to Labazof.

"Her marriage was a very romantic story, and it all took place under my eyes. Natasha was almost engaged to Miatlin, who was afterward killed in a duel with Debro. Just at that time Prince Piotr came to Moscow, fell in love with her, and made her an offer. Only her father, who was very favorably inclined to Miatlin and was especially afraid of Labazof as a Mason — her father refused his consent. But the young man continued to meet her at balls, everywhere, and he made friends with Miatlin, and asked him to withdraw. Miatlin consented. Labazof persuaded her to elope with him. She had already agreed to do so, but repented at the last moment" — the conversation was carried on in French — "she went to her father and told him that all was ready for their elopement, and that she could leave him, but that she hoped for his generosity. And in fact her father forgave her, all took her part, and he gave his consent. And so the wedding took place, and it was a gay wedding! Who of us dreamed that within a year she would follow him to Siberia? She was an only daughter, the richest and handsomest heiress of that time. The Emperor Alexander always paid her attention at balls, and how many times he danced with her. The Countess G. gave a *bal costumé*, if I re-

member rightly; and she went as a Neapolitan girl, wonderfully beautiful. Whenever the Emperor came to Moscow he would ask: *Que fait la belle Napolitaine?* And suddenly this woman, in a delicate condition,— her baby was born on the way,— without a moment's hesitation, without making any preparations, without packing her trunks, just as she was, when they arrested him, followed him for five thousand versts."

"Oh, what a wonderful woman," exclaimed the hostess.

"And both he and she were such uncommon people," said still another woman. "I have been told, but I don't know whether it is true or not, that everywhere in Siberia where they work in the mines, or whatever it is called, the convicts who were with them became better from associating with them."

"Yes; but she never worked in the mines," corrected Pakhtin.

That is what the year '56 was! Three years before no one had a thought for the Labazofs, and if any one remembered them, it was with that inexplicable sense of terror with which one speaks of the recently dead. Now how vividly all their former relations were remembered, all their admirable qualities were brought up, and every lady already began to form plans for securing a monoply of the Labazofs, and by means of them to attract other guests.

"Their son and daughter have come with them," said Pakhtin.

"If only they are as handsome as their mother was!" said the Countess Fuchs.... however, their father also was very, very handsome."

"How could they educate their children there?" queried the hostess.

"They say they are admirably educated. They say the young man is so handsome, so likeable! and educated as if he had been brought up in Paris."

"I predict a great success for the young lady," said a very handsome girl. "All these Siberian ladies have about them something pleasantly trivial, and every one likes it."

"Yes, that is so," said another girl.

"So we have still another wealthy match," said a third girl.

The old colonel, who was of German extraction, and three years before had come to Moscow to make a rich marriage, decided that it was for his interest, as soon as possible, before the young men found out about this, to get an introduction to her, and offer himself. The girls and ladies had almost precisely the same thought regarding the young man from Siberia.

"This must be and is my fate," thought one girl who for eight years had been vainly launched on society. "It must have been for the best that that stupid cavalier guardsman did not offer himself to me. I should surely have been unhappy.

"Well, they will all grow yellow with jealousy when this young man like the rest falls in love with me," thought a young and beautiful woman.

Whatever is said of the provincialism of small towns, there is nothing worse than the provincialism of high society. There one finds no new faces, but society is ready to take up with any new persons as soon as once they appear; here it is rarely that, as now with the Labazofs, people are acknowledged as belonging to their circle and received, and the sensation produced by these new personages was even stronger than would have been the case in a district city.

III

"Moscow, oh, Mother Moscow, white-walled city!"[1] exclaimed Piotr Ivanovitch, rubbing his eyes the next morning and listening to the sound of bells that floated above the Gazetnui Pereulok.

Nothing so vividly recalls the past as sounds; and these peals of the Moscow bells, together with the sight of the white wall seen from the window and the rattle of wheels, so vividly recalled to him not only that Mos-

[1] *Moskva-to, Moskva-to matushka byelokamennaya.*

cow which he had known thirty-five years before, but also that Moscow with its Kreml, its roofs, its Ivans, and the rest which he had borne in his heart, that he felt a childish delight in the fact that he was a Russian and that he was in Moscow.

There appeared a Bukhara khalat, flung open over a broad chest in a chintz shirt, a pipe with an amber mouthpiece, a lackey with gentle manners, tea, the scent of tobacco; a loud impetuous voice of a man was heard in Chevalier's rooms; morning kisses were exchanged, and the voices of daughter and son intermingled, and the Dekabrist was just as much at home as in Irkutsk or as he would have been in New York or Paris.

As I should not wish to present to my readers my Dekabrist hero as above all weaknesses, it must be confessed in the interests of truth that Piotr Ivanovitch shaved himself with the greatest care, combed his hair, and looked into the mirror. He was dissatisfied with his coat, which had been none too well mended in Siberia, and twice he unbuttoned and buttoned up his waistcoat.

Natalya Nikolayevna came into the drawing-room with her black moire gown rustling, with such sleeves and laces on her cap, that, although it was entirely out of the prevalent fashion, still it was so devised that it not only was not *ridicule* but on the contrary *distingué*. But in case of ladies this is a peculiar sixth sense, and sagacity is not to be compared with it.

Sonya was likewise so constituted that, although everything she wore was at least two years behind the style, still one could find no fault with it. The mother wore what was dark and simple; the daughter what was light and gay.

Serozha had only just woke up, and the ladies went without him to mass. The father and the mother sat behind, the daughter in front. Vasili sat on the box, and an izvoshchik's cab carried them to the Kreml. When they entered, the ladies adjusted their gowns, and Piotr Ivanovitch took Natalya Nikolayevna on his arm, and, hanging his head, entered the doors of the cathedral. Few — either merchants, or officers, or the common

people — could have known who these strangers were. Who was that deeply sunburnt and decrepit old man with the straight and circling wrinkles, indicative of a laborious life — wrinkles of a kind never met with at the English club — with his hair and beard white as snow, with his proud yet kindly glance and his energetic movements? Who was that tall lady with her air of distinction and her large beautiful eyes, so weary and so dim? Who was that strong, fresh, well-proportioned girl, dressed so unfashionably, and yet so self-assured? Of the merchant class or not of the merchant class? Germans or not Germans? People of rank? Apparently not, and yet evidently people of distinction.

Thus thought those that saw them in the church, and consequently they all even more willingly made haste to step aside and to let them pass than if they were men with heavy epaulets.

Piotr Ivanovitch held himself as majestically as at his entrance, and said his prayers with dignity and solemnity, not forgetting himself.

Natalya Nikolayevna knelt lightly, taking out her handkerchief, and she wept many tears during the time of the Kheruvimskaya song. Sonya evidently seemed to be making an effort to control herself so as to say her prayers. The service did not appeal to her, but she did not look round; she crossed herself assiduously.

Serozha stayed at home partly because he slept over, partly because he did not like to stand during the service; it made his feet swell, and he never could understand why it was that to travel on snow-shoes forty versts did not trouble him in the least, while to stand during the twelve Gospels caused him the greatest physical pain; but his chief excuse was that he needed new clothes.

He dressed and went to the Kuznetsky Most. He had plenty of money. His father had made it a rule ever since his son was twenty-one years old, to give him as much money as he wanted. It was in his power to leave his father and mother absolutely penniless.

What a pity about the two hundred and fifty silver

rubles which he wasted in Kuntz's ready-made clothing establishment! Any one of the gentlemen who passed Serozha on the street would have gladly taught him, and would have considered it a pleasure to go with him to show him what to get; but, as usually happens, he was alone in the throng, and he went along the Kuznetsky Most in his cap, opened the door, and emerged from there in a cinnamon-colored semi-dress-coat, cut narrow, — they were worn wide, — in black trousers, cut wide, — they were worn narrow, — and in a flowered satin waistcoat which not one of the gentlemen who frequented the special room at Chevalier's would have permitted himself to bestow on his lackey; and these things Serozha bought largely because Kuntz was in perplexity about the young man's slender figure, and, as he was in the habit of saying to all his customers, he declared that he had never seen the like before.

Serozha knew that he had a good figure, but the praise of a stranger like Kuntz greatly flattered him. He went out minus his two hundred and fifty rubles; and yet he was very badly dressed, so badly in fact that his new clothes within two days went into the possession of Vasili, and this episode always remained an unpleasant recollection for Serozha. When he reached the hotel again he went down-stairs and took his seat in the large room, also looking into the Chevalier's private room, and he called for such strange dishes for his breakfast that the *garçon* when he went into the kitchen had to laugh. But nevertheless he asked for a newspaper and pretended to read it. When the *garçon*, presuming on the youth's inexperience, began to ask him questions, Serozha bade him go to his place and his face grew red. But he spoke so haughtily that the man obeyed him. His mother, his father, and sister when they returned home found likewise that his new clothes were admirable.

Do you remember that delightful feeling of childhood when on your name-day you were dressed up in your best, and were taken to mass, and then, returning home with the festival in your clothes, in your face, and in your soul, you found guests and toys waiting for you?

You knew that on that day you had no lessons, that your elders also rejoiced with you, that for the entire house that day was exceptional and joyous; you knew that you alone were the sole cause of this enthusiasm, and that whatever you did, it would be forgiven you; and it seemed strange that people in the street were not also rejoicing with you, just as your friends were, and everything sounded louder and the lights were brighter; in a word, it was the festival feeling. Such a feeling did Piotr Ivanovitch experience on returning from church.

Pakhtin's evening labors had not been in vain; instead of toys Piotr Ivanovitch, when he reached his rooms, found a number of visiting cards of influential Muscovites who in '56 counted it their bounden duty to show the distinguished exile all possible attention, although three years before they would not have cared to see him. In the eyes of Chevalier, the Swiss, and the people of the hotel, the arrival of so many carriages with inquiries for Piotr Ivanovitch in one single morning multiplied their respect and obsequiousness tenfold. All this stood for the name-day gifts for Piotr Ivanovitch. However experienced in life a man may be, wise as he may be, the manifestation of respect from men who are themselves respected by the great majority of men is always pleasant. Piotr Ivanovitch felt gay at heart when Chevalier, bowing, proposed to him to change his rooms for better ones, and begged him to make known whatever he would like done for his comfort, and assured him that he counted it an honor to have him a guest at his hotel; and, so it was when, glancing over the cards and again throwing them into the card-receiver, he mentioned the names of Count S——, Prince D——, and the like. Natalya Nikolayevna declared that she would receive no one, but would go immediately to Marya Ivanovna's, and to this Piotr Ivanovitch agreed, although he would have been glad to talk with many of the visitors.

Only one of the visitors succeeded in forcing the countersign. This was Pakhtin. If this man had been asked why he had come from Pretchistenka to the Ga-

zetnui Pereulok, he would not have been able to give any satisfactory excuse, except that he liked anything which was new and interesting, and so he had come to look at Piotr Ivanovitch as at a curiosity. It might be thought that he would have felt a little hesitation at intruding with such an excuse on a perfect stranger to him. But it was quite the contrary. Piotr Ivanovitch and his son and Sofya Petrovna were dumfounded. Natalya Nikolayevna was too much of a *grande dame* to be confused at any such thing. A weary look from her beautiful black eyes rested calmly on Pakhtin. Pakhtin was fresh, self-satisfied, and very genial, as usual. He and Marya Ivanovna were friends.

"Ah!" said Natalya Nikolayevna.

"Well, not exactly friends — our years, you know, but she has always been very kind to me."

Pakhtin had been long a worshiper of Piotr Ivanovitch; he knew his companions. He hoped he might be useful to the newcomers. He had intended to have come the evening before; but had not been able to manage it, and he begged them to excuse him, and so he sat down and talked for a long time.

"Yes, I will tell you that I have found many changes in Russia since I went away," said Piotr Ivanovitch, in reply to a question. As soon as Piotr Ivanovitch began to speak it was worth while to notice with what respectful attention Pakhtin listened to every word which fell from the old man's lips, and how, at every phrase or word, Pakhtin, by a nod, a smile, or a motion of the eyes, let it be understood that he was listening, and taking in all the force of words and phrases so memorable. The weary eyes approved this manœuver. Sergyeï Petrovitch, it seemed, was afraid that his father's talk would not be worth the hearer's attention. Sofya Petrovna, on the contrary, smiled with that slight smile of satisfaction characteristic of people who detect the ridiculous side of a man. It seemed to her that nothing was to be expected from this man, that he was a "softy"[1] as she and her brother called a certain kind of man.

[1] *Shiushka.*

Piotr Ivanovitch explained that during his journey he had remarked many great changes which pleased him.

"Beyond doubt the people — the peasantry — are greatly improved; there has come to be greater recognition in them of their dignity," said he, as if repeating an old phrase.

"And I must say, that the people interest me, and always have interested me, more than anything else. I firmly believe that the strength of Russia is not in us, but in the common people."

Piotr Ivanovitch, with a warmth characteristic of him, communicated his more or less original ideas concerning a number of important subjects. We shall have to hear them more at length. Pakhtin was enraptured, and expressed his perfect agreement with everything: —

"You will surely have to make the acquaintance of the Aksatofs; you will allow me to present them to you, prince? You know his new journal is now to be permitted; the first number will be out to-morrow. I have read his wonderful article on the orderliness of the theory of science in the abstract. Thoroughly interesting. There is still another article of his — the history of Serbia in the eleventh century, of that famous voyevode Karbovanietz; also very interesting. On the whole it is a great stride in advance."

"Oh, yes," said Piotr Ivanovitch. But all this news evidently did not interest him; he did not even know the names and services of these men whom Pakhtin spoke about as if they were universally known. Natalya Nikolayevna, however, not scorning the necessity of knowing all these men and conditions, remarked in her husband's exculpation that Pierre received the journals very late, but he read them very assiduously.

"Papa, are we going to auntie's?" asked Sonya, coming in.

"Yes, but we must have luncheon first. Would n't you like something?"

Pakhtin, of course, refused; but Piotr Ivanovitch, with hospitality peculiarly Russian, and characteristic of himself, insisted on Pakhtin's having something to eat

and drink. He himself drank a small glass of vodka and a cup of Bordeaux. Pakhtin noticed that, when he drank the wine, Natalya Nikolayevna unexpectedly turned away from the glass, and the son looked at his father's hand. After the wine, Piotr Ivanovitch replied to Pakhtin's questions as to what he thought about the new literature, the new tendencies, about the war, about the peace. Pakhtin knew how to unite the most divergent topics into one disconnected but fluent conversation.

To these questions Piotr Ivanovitch immediately launched into a general *profession de foi*, and either the wine, or the topic of conversation, caused him to grow so excited that tears stood in his eyes, and Pakhtin grew enthusiastic and even wept; he did not hesitate to express his conviction that Piotr Ivanovitch was far ahead of the most advanced liberals, and that he ought to be the leader of all parties. Piotr Ivanovitch's eyes flashed; he had faith in all Pakhtin said to him, and he would have continued the conversation much longer if Sofya Petrovna had not conspired with Natalya Nikolayevna to put on her mantilla, and had not herself come in to get Piotr Ivanovitch.

He was going to drink up the rest of his wine, but Sofya Petrovna took it herself.

"What do you mean?"

"I have n't had any yet, papa. Excuse me."

He smiled.

"Well, we must go to Marya Ivanovna's. You pardon us, Mr. Pakhtin."

And Piotr Ivanovitch went out, carrying his head high. In the vestibule he fell in with a general who had come to pay his respects to his old friend. They had not met for thirty-five years. The general had no teeth and was bald.

"Why, how fresh you are," said he, "Siberia must be better than Petersburg. Are these your family? Pray present me! What a fine young man your son is. Then you will dine with us to-morrow?"

"Yes, yes, certainly."

On the doorstep they met the famous Chikhayef, also an old acquaintance.

"How did you know that I had come?"

"It would be a shame for Moscow, if it was not known; it was a shame that you were not met at the barriers. If you are going out to dine, it must be at your sister's, Marya Ivanovna's. Well, that is excellent; I shall be there also."

Piotr Ivanovitch always had the look of a proud man for those who could not penetrate that exterior and read his expression of unspeakable goodness and susceptibility; but now Natalya Nikolayevna admired him for his unusual majesty, and Sofya Petrovna's eyes smiled as she looked at him.

They reached Marya Ivanovna's.

Marya Ivanova was Piotr Ivanovnitch's godmother and was ten years his senior. She was an old maid.

Her story and how she failed to secure a husband, and how she lived in her youth, I shall tell in some other place.

She had lived uninterruptedly in Moscow. She had neither great intellect nor great wealth, and she did not value her relatives, on the contrary; but there was not a man who would not value her friendship. She was so convinced that all ought to value her, that all did value her. There were young liberals from the university who did not acknowledge her power, but these gentlemen conspired only in her absence. All it required was for her to walk with her imperial gait into the drawing-room, to speak in her calm manner, to smile her caressing smile, and they were subjected. Her circle included every one. She looked on Moscow and treated it as her own household. Her special friends consisted of young people and intellectual men; women she did not like. She had also those sycophants, male and female, whom, for some reason or other, our literature has included in the general scorn it lavishes on the Hungarian cloak and on generals. But Marya Ivanovna considered that it was better for the ruined gambler Skopin and the "grass widow" Byesheva to live with her than in poverty, and so she supported them.

There were two powerful feelings in Marya Ivanovna's present existence; they were her two brothers. Piotr Ianovitch was her idol. Prince Ivan was her detestation. She did not know that Piotr Ivanovitch had come, she had been at mass, and was at the present moment drinking her coffee. The vicar of Moscow, Byesheva, and Skopin were sitting at the table. Marya Ivanovna was telling them of the young Count V——, the son of Count P. Z——, who had just returned from Sevastopol and with whom she was in love — for she was always having passions. He was to dine with her that day.

The vicar got up and took his leave. Marya Ivanovna did not attempt to detain him. She was a latitudinarian in this respect; she was pious, but she did not like monks. She made sport of girls who ran after them, and she said boldly that, in her opinion, monks were the same kind of people as we poor sinners, and that salvation was to be obtained in the world better than in monasteries.

"Give out word that I am not receiving," said she. "I am going to write to Pierre; I don't understand why he has not come yet. Probably Natalya Nikolayevna is ill."

Marya Ivanovna was convinced that Natalya Nikolayevna did not like her, and was her enemy. She could never forgive her because it was Natalya Nikolayevna, and not she, his sister, who gave him her property and went with him to Siberia, and because her brother had definitely refused to accept this sacrifice when she had got ready to go with him. After thirty-five years she was beginning to believe her brother in his assertion that Natalya Nikolayevna was the best woman in the world, and his guardian angel; but she was jealous of her, and she kept imagining that she was a wicked woman.

She got up, went through the "hall," and was starting for her library when the door opened, and the gray-haired Byesheva's wrinkled face, expressing a joyous terror, appeared in the doorway.

"Marya Ivanovna, prepare your mind," said she.

"A letter?"

"No, something more important."

But, before she had a chance to finish her sentence, a man's loud voice was heard in the vestibule.

"Where is she? You go on, Natasha."

"It is he!" exclaimed Marya Ivanovna, and with long, firm steps she went to her brother. She met him as if she had parted with him only the day before.

"When did you arrive? Where are you staying? How did you come — by carriage?" Such questions as this did Marya Ivanovna put, as she went with him into the drawing-room; nor did she wait or listen to his replies, but kept looking, with wide-open eyes, now at one, now at another of them. Byesheva was amazed at such calmness, or indifference rather, and did not approve of it. They all smiled; the conversation languished. Marya Ivanovna relapsed into silence, and kept looking at her brother gravely.

"How are you?" asked Piotr Ivanovitch, taking her hand, and smiling.

Piotr Ivanovitch addressed his sister with the plural pronoun "vui," and she used the singular "tui." Marya Ivanovna looked once more at the gray beard and the bald head, at his teeth, at the wrinkles around his eyes, at his sunburned face, and she knew it all.

"Here is my Sonya."

But she did not look at her.

"What a foo...."

Her voice broke; she seized her brother's bald head with both her big white hands. "What a fool you were," she was going to say, "that you did not give me warning," but her bosom and shoulders shook, her face grew convulsed, and she began to sob, while still pressing the bald head to her bosom, and repeating: —

"What a foo-l you were not to give me notice."

Piotr Ivanovitch no longer seemed to himself such a great man, or so important, as he had seemed to be when he stood on the doorsteps of the Hôtel Chevalier. He was seated in an arm-chair, but his head was in his sister's arms, and his nose was squeezed against her corset, and something tickled his nose, and his hair was tumbled, and tears were in his eyes. But still he liked it.

When this ebullition of happy tears had passed, Marya Ivanovna realized and believed in the reality of what had happened, and began to study them all. But several times again, during the course of that day, when it came over her what he had once been, and what she had once been, and what they were now, and when her imagination vividly pictured their past unhappiness, and their former happiness and their former love, she would again spring up, and say: —

"What a fool you were, Petrushka; what a fool not to give me warning. Why did you not come directly to me? I would have taken you in," said Marya Ivanovna. "At any rate, you will dine with me. It won't be a bore to you, Sergyeï, for a young hero from Sevastopol is coming. But don't you know the son of Nikolaï Mikhaïlovitch? He is a writer who has already written something. I have not read it yet, but it is praised, and he is a fine young fellow. I will have him invited. Chikhayef also wanted to come. Well, he is a chatterbox. I don't like him. He 's been to see you already. And have you seen Nikita? Now all that is rubbish. What do you intend to do? And how is your health, Natalie? Where did you get this handsome lad and lassie?"

But the conversation kept flagging.

Before dinner Natalya Nikolayevna and the children went to see the old aunt. The brother and sister were left alone together, and he began to unfold his plans.

"Sonya is grown up; we shall have to bring her out; of course we shall live in Moscow," said Marya Ivanovna.

"Not for the world."

"Serozha will have to go into the service."

"Not for the world."

"You are as crazy as ever."

Nevertheless, she had a great fondness for the "crazy" one.

"We shall have to settle down here, then go into the country and show the children everything."

"My rule is not to interfere in family affairs," said

Marya Ivanovna, who was now growing calm after her excitement, "and I never give advice. But that a young man should go into the service I have always thought, and think so still, but now more than ever. You have no idea, Petrusha, what young men are nowadays. I know them all; here is Prince Dmitri's son, — he has entirely failed. Yes, and what is more, they are to blame for it. You see, I am not afraid of any one; I am an old woman, and it is not well."

And she began to talk about the government. She was dissatisfied with the excessive freedom granted to every one.

"They have done one good thing, — they let you come home. That is good."

Petrusha began to speak in the government's defense, but Marya Ivanovna was of a different nature from Pakhtin's. She would not argue with him; she instantly grew heated.

"Now, here you are defending it? Why do you defend it? I see you are just the same, just as unreasonable as ever."

Piotr Ivanovitch held his peace, but smiled faintly, showing that he was not convinced, but that he did not wish to quarrel with Marya Ivanovna.

"You smile. We know what that means. You don't want to discuss with me, with an old woman," said she, gayly and soothingly, and looking at her brother more keenly, more cleverly, than one would have expected from an old woman with such strong features. "Yes, you 'd better not discuss, little friend. You see, I have lived seventy years. And I have not lived to be a fool, either; but I have seen some things and learned some things; I have not read your books, and I don't intend to read them, either. What rubbish there is in books."

"Now tell me how my children please you," said Piotr Ivanovitch, with the same smile.

"Well, well, now," said his sister, threatening him, "don't get on to the subject of your children yet; we will talk about that by and by. But here is something I want to tell you. You are such an unpractical man.

I can see it by your eyes you are just what you always have been. And now they will make much of you. That is the fashion now; you are all in the style. Yes, yes, I see it in your eyes that you are just the same impracticable fellow that you always were," she added, replying to his smile. "You had better keep in the background. I pray to Christ our God to keep you from all these modern liberals. God knows what they are up to. This thing is sure; it will end badly. Our government is keeping quiet now, but by and by it will show its claws; mark my word, I am afraid you will get entangled again. Give it up, it 's all folly; you have children."

"You see you don't know me now, Marya Ivanovna," said her brother.

"Very good, but we shall see. Either I don't know you, or you don't know yourself. I have only said what was in my mind, and if you heed me, well and good. But now let us talk about Serozha. What do you think about him?" — She was going to say, "He does not please me very much;" but she said — "He resembles his mother; they are as alike as two drops of water. Now there is your Sonya. She pleases me very much; there is something very sweet and frank about her. Very pretty. Where is she, where is Sonyushka? Yes, I had forgotten about her."

"What can I say? Sonya will make a good wife and a good mother, but Serozha is clever, very clever, no one can deny that. He is an excellent scholar, though he is rather lazy. He has a great aptitude for the natural sciences. We were very fortunate; we had a splendid, splendid tutor for him. He wants to enter the university; to have lectures on the natural sciences, chemistry ...."

"If you only knew, Petrusha, how I pity them," said she, in a tone of genuine, softened, and even submissive melancholy. "So sorry, so sorry! Their whole life before them. What won't they have to endure!"

"Well, we must hope that they will be more fortunate than we were."

"God grant it, God grant it! Oh, life is hard, Pe-

trusha! Now listen to me in one thing. Don't go into subtleties, my dear. What a fool you are, Petrusha, oh, what a fool! However, I made some arrangements. I have invited some people, and what shall I give them to eat?"

She gave a little sob, turned round, and rang the bell.

"Call Taras."

"Is the old man still with you?" asked her brother.

"Yes, he is still here. But you'll see he is only a boy in comparison with me."

Taras was surly and blunt, but he undertook to do everything.

Shortly after, elated with the cold and their joy, came in Natalya Nikolayevna and Sonya, their gowns rustling. Serozha had remained to make some more purchases.

"Let me look at her."

Marya Ivanovna clasped her face between her two hands.

Natalya Nikolayevna told what she had been doing.

SECOND FRAGMENT

(Variant of the First Chapter)

The lawsuit brought by the proprietor, Ivan Apuikhtin, retired lieutenant of the guard, for the possession of four thousand desyatins of land occupied by his neighbors, the crown-peasants of the village of Izlegoshchi, in the district of Krasnoslobodsky, government of Penza, had been decided at the first trial, by the District Court, in favor of the peasants, through the clever pleading of Ivan Mironof their advocate, and an enormous *datcha*, or parcel, of land, part forest, and part cultivated, cleared by Apuikhtin's serfs, fell into the hands of the peasants in 1815; and in 1816 the peasants sowed this land and harvested the crops. The profit of this irregular action of the peasants surprised all the neighborhood and the peasants themselves.

This success of the peasants was explained solely by the fact that Ivan Petrovitch Apuikhtin, a man of very sweet and peaceable nature, and no lover of lawsuits, though he was convinced of his rights in the matter, had taken no measures against the peasants. Ivan Mironof, however, a peasant who had studied law, a dry, hawk-nosed, educated muzhik, who had been *golova*, or head man, and had been about as collector of taxes, made an assessment of fifty kopeks apiece from each of the men, and spent this money to the best advantage in bribes, and cleverly conducted the whole affair to a successful issue.

But shortly after the decision of the District Court, Apuikhtin, seeing his danger, gave a power of attorney to a skilful lawyer, Ilya Mitrofanof, who appealed the case to the higher court against the decision of the District Court. Ilya Mitrofanof conducted the affair so cleverly that, in spite of the efforts of Ivan Mironof, the peasants' advocate, notwithstanding all the considerable gifts of money presented by him to the members of the tribunal, the decision of the District was reversed in favor of the proprietor, and the land once more had to to be given up by the peasants. and their advocate had to make the announcement to them. Their advocate, Ivan Mironof, explained to the assembled peasants, that the gentlemen of the government had "lengthened the proprietor's arm and spoiled the affair entirely," so they were going to take away the land from them again; but that the proprietor's business would fall through because his petition had already been written to the senate, and there was a man there who had faithfully promised to do the right thing in the senate, and that then the land would be forever granted to the peasants: all that was wanted was a fresh assessment of a ruble apiece from every soul among them. The peasants voted to collect the money, and once more they intrusted the whole affair to Ivan Mironof. Having got the money, Mironof went to Petersburg.

When the season for plowing opened in Holy Week, 1817 — it came late that year — the peasants of Izlego-

shchi met in an assembly and began to discuss whether they should cultivate the disputed land that year; and notwithstanding the fact that Apuikhtin's manager had come during Lent with an order to them not to plow his land, and to render account of the rye that they had harvested the year before, nevertheless the peasants, for the very reason that they had already sowed their winter crop on the disputed land, and because Apuikhtin, not wishing to be too hard on them, was trying to give them a fair chance, decided to cultivate the disputed land, and to take hold of it before they did anything else. On the very day the peasants went to plow the Berestof datcha, on Maundy Thursday, Ivan Petrovitch Apuikhtin, who had been fasting during Holy Week, partook of the communion and went early in the morning to the church in the village of Izlegoshchi, of which he was a parishioner, and there, being unwitting of the peasants' action, attended mass amiably with the church elder.

Ivan Petrovitch made confession in the afternoon and had the vespers performed at his house; in the morning he himself read the precepts, and at eight o'clock he left his house. They were expecting him at mass. As he stood at the altar where he usually stood, Ivan Petrovitch reasoned rather than prayed; and so he was dissatisfied with himself. He, like many men of his time, indeed of all times, felt that his attitude toward the faith was not clear. He was now fifty years old, he had never neglected the Church ritual, he went to church regularly and fasted once a year; in talking with his only daughter he had tried to ground her in the fundamentals of the true faith: but if any one had asked him exactly what he himself believed, he would have found it hard to decide what answer to give. Especially on this particular day he felt his heart melt within him, and, as he stood by the altar, instead of saying the prayers, he kept thinking how strangely everything was arranged in this world: here he was, almost an old man, who had fasted perhaps forty times in his life, and he knew that all his domestics and all in the church regarded him as a model, took him as an ex-

ample, and he felt himself bound to set this example in relation to religion; but here he did not know anything, and before long it would be time for him to die, and for the life of him he could not tell whether what he was giving his people as an example was true or not. And it was strange to him how all — as he could see — took it for granted that old people were firm in the faith and knew what was necessary and what was not necessary — so he had always thought of old people; and here he was an old man, and yet he really did not know and was just as uncertain as he had been when he was twenty; hitherto he had disguised this fact, but now he acknowledged it.

Just as when he was a child the thought had sometimes occurred to him during service to crow like a cock, so now all sorts of ridiculous notions went through his brain; but here he was, an old man, reverently bowing, resting the aged bones of his hand on the flagging of the floor, and here was Father Vasili showing evident signs of timidity in performing the service before him, and "thus by our zeal we encourage his!"

"But if they only knew what notions were flying through my head. But it is sin, it is sin, I must conquer it by prayer," said he to himself as the service began; and as he listened to the significance of the Ektenia,[1] he tried to pray, and in fact his emotions speedily carried him over into the spirit of prayer, and he began to realize his sins, and all that he had confessed.

A pleasant old man, walking evenly in bark shoes which had lost their shape, with a bald spot in the midst of his thick gray hair, wearing a shuba with a patch half way down the back, came up to the altar, bowed to the ground, shook back his hair, and went behind the altar to place the candles.

This was the church *starosta*, or elder, Ivan Feodotof, one of the best muzhiks of the village of Izlegoshchi. Ivan Petrovitch knew him. The sight of this grave, firm face led Ivan Petrovitch into a new trend of thought. He was one of the muzhiks that wanted to

[1] Liturgy in behalf of the Emperor and his family.

get his land away from him, and one of the best and richest of the married farmers who needed land, who knew how to till it, and with good reason.

His grave face, his reverent obeisance, his dignified walk, the neatness of his attire, — his leg-wrappers clung round his calves like stockings, and the fastenings were symmetrically crossed so that they were the same on both, — his whole appearance, seemed to express reproach and animosity to all that was of the earth.

"Now I have asked forgiveness of my wife and of my daughter Mani, and of my servant Volodya, and now I must ask also this man's forgiveness and forgive him," said Ivan Petrovitch, and he determined to go and ask forgiveness of Ivan Feodotof after the service.

And so he did.

There were few people in the church. The majority made their devotions in the first or the fourth week of Lent. So that now there were only about forty men and women who had not been able to attend the services earlier, besides a few old men — devoted church attendants from among Apuikhtin's house servants and those of his rich neighbors, the Chernuishefs. There were among them an old lady, a relative of the Chernuishefs, who lived with them, and the widow of a sacristan, whose son the Chernuishefs, out of sheer kindness, had educated and made a man of, and who was now serving as a functionary in the senate.

Between matins and mass comparatively few remained in the church. The peasant men and women stayed outside. There remained two beggar women, sitting in one corner, whispering together and occasionally glancing at Ivan Petrovitch with an evident desire to wish his health and talk with him, and two lackeys, his own lackey, in livery, and the Chernuishefs', who had come with the old lady. These two were also whispering together with great animation when Ivan Petrovitch came out from behind the altar, and as soon as they saw him they stopped talking.

There was still another woman in the high head-dress decorated with glass beads, and a white shuba, which she wrapped round a sick infant, trying to keep it from screaming. Then there was still another, a hunch-backed old woman also in a peasant head-dress, but decorated with woolen tags, and in a white kerchief tied in old woman's fashion, and wearing a gray *chuprun*, or sack, with cocks embroidered down the back, and she knelt in the middle of the church, bowing toward an ancient image which was placed between the grated windows, and covered with a new towel with red ends, and she prayed so fervently, solemnly, and passionately, that it was impossible to avoid noticing her.

Before going to speak to the church elder, who was standing at the closet, kneading the candle-ends into a ball of wax, Ivan Petrovitch paused to glance at this old woman praying. She prayed very fluently. She knelt as straight as one could when addressing an image; all of her limbs were composed with mathematical symmetry, the toes of her bark shoes touched the stone flagging in exactly the same spot, her body was bent back as far as the hump on her back permitted, her arms were folded with absolute regularity across her stomach, her head was thrown back, and her wrinkled face, with an expression of modest entreaty, with dim eyes was turning directly toward the towel-covered ikon. After she had remained motionless in such a position for a minute or less, but still a definitely determined time, she drew a long sigh, and, withdrawing her right hand, with a wide swing she raised it higher than her head-dress, touched the crown of her head with her closed fingers, and thus widely made the sign of the cross on her abdomen and on her shoulders, and then bringing it back again she bowed her head down to her hands, spread according to rule on the ground, and once more she lifted herself and once more repeated the whole operation.

"There is true prayer," said Ivan Petrovitch to himself, as he looked at her; "not such as us sinners offer; here is faith, though I know that she addresses her image or her towel or the jewels on the image, as they

all do. But it is all right. Why not? Each person has his own creed," said he to himself; "she prays to an image, and here I consider it necessary to beg pardon of a muzhik!"

And he started to find the starosta, involuntarily looking about the church to see if any one was watching his proposed action, which was both pleasing and humiliating to him. It was disagreeable to him to have the old women — beggars, he called them, — see him, but most disagreeable of all was it to have Mishka, his lackey, see him; in Mishka's presence — he knew his keen, shrewd wit — he felt that he had not the power to seek Ivan Feodotof. And he beckoned Mishka to come to him.

"What do you wish?"

"Please go, brother, and get me the rug from the calash, it is so damp here for one's legs."

"I will do so."

And as soon as Mishka had left the church, Ivan Petrovitch immediately went to Ivan Feodotof.

Ivan Feodotof was abashed, just as if he had been detected in some misdemeanor, as soon as his barin drew near. His bashfulness and nervous movements made a strange contrast with his grave face and his curly steel-gray hair and beard. "Do you wish a ten-kopek candle," he asked, lifting the cover of his desk, and only occasionally raising his large handsome eyes to his barin.

"No, I need no candle. Ivan, I ask you to pardon me for Christ's sake, if I have in any way offended you. .... Pardon me, for Christ's sake," he repeated, bowing low.

Ivan Feodotof was wholly dumfounded, and at a loss what to say, but at last he said, with a gentle smirk, collecting his wits: —

"God pardons. As far as I know I have nothing to complain of from you. God pardons, there is no offense," he hastily repeated.

"Still...."

"God pardons, Ivan Petrovitch. Then you will have two ten-kopek candles?"

"Yes, two."

"He 's an angel, just an angel; he begs pardon of a mean peasant. O Lord, he is truly an angel!" exclaimed the deacon's wife, who wore an old black capote and a black kerchief. "And just what we ought to expect."

"Ah, Paramonovna," exclaimed Ivan Petrovitch, turning to her. "Are you preparing for the sacrament? I ask your pardon also, for Christ's sake."

"God pardons, oh, you angel,[1] my kind benefactor, let me kiss your hand."

"There, that will do, that will do! You know I don't like that sort of thing," said Ivan Petrovitch, smiling, and he went to the altar.

The mass, as it was ordinarily performed in the Izlegoshchi parish, was of short duration, the more so because there were few participants. When the "holy gates" were opened after "Our Father" had been said, Ivan Petrovitch glanced at the northern door to summon Mishka to take his shuba. When the priest noticed this movement, he sternly beckoned to the deacon; the deacon almost ran and summoned the lackey Mikhaïl. Ivan Petrovitch was in a self-satisfied and happy frame of mind, but this obsequiousness and the expression of deference shown by the priest who was officiating at mass, again distracted him, his thin, curved, smooth-shaven lips grew still more curved, and a flash of satire came into his kindly eyes.

"It is just as if I were his general," said he to himself, and he instantly remembered the words spoken by his German tutor, whom he once took with him to the altar to witness the Russian service; how this German had amused him and angered his wife by saying: —

"*Der Pop war ganz böse, dass ich ihm Alles nachgesehen hatte.*[2] It also occurred to him how a young Turk had once declared that there was no God, because he had nothing more to eat.

[1] *Batyushka, angel tui moï.*

[2] The priest was very angry, because I kept watching him all the time.

"And here I am taking the communion," he said to himself, and, frowning, he performed the reverences.

And, taking off his bearskin shuba, and remaining only in a blue coat with bright buttons and a high white cravat and waistcoat and close-fitting trousers in heelless boots with pointed toes, he went in his quiet, unobtrusive, and easy gait to bow before the images of the church. And again even here he met with the same complaisance on the part of the participants, who made room for him.

"They seem to be saying, *apres vous s'il en reste*," he remarked to himself, as he made his obeisances to the very ground, with an awkwardness which arose from the fact that he had to find the mean between what might be irreverence and hypocrisy. At last the doors opened. He followed the priest in the reading of the prayer repeating the *yako razboïnika*,[1] they covered his cravat with the sacred veil, and he partook of the sacrament, and of the tepid water in the ancient vessel, and placed his coins in the ancient plates. He listened to the last prayers, bowed low toward the cross, and, putting on his shuba, left the church acknowledging the salutations and experiencing a pleasant sensation of a good work accomplished. As he left the church he again fell in with Ivan Feodotovitch.

"Thank you, thank you," said he, in reply to his salutation. "Tell me, are you going to plow soon?"

"The boys have begun, the boys have begun," replied Ivan Feodotovitch, even more timidly than usual. He supposed that Ivan Petrovitch already knew where the men of Izlegoshchi had gone to plow. "Well, it has been wet, been wet. It is yet early, as yet it is early."

Ivan Petrovitch went to the memorial of his father and mother, bowed low, and then took his seat in his calash drawn by six horses with outrider.

"Well, thank the Lord," said he to himself, as he swayed gently on the soft easy springs, and gazed up at the spring sky with scattered clouds, and at the bare ground, and at the white spots of still unmelted snow, and at the closely twisted tail of the off horse, and

[1] "Like a malefactor."

breathed in the joyous, fresh spring air which was especially pleasant after the atmosphere of the church.

"Thank God that I have partaken of the communion, and thank God that I can take a little snuff."

And he took out his snuff-box and long held the tobacco between his thumb and finger, and with the same hand, not applying the snuff, he raised his hat in reply to the low bows of the people whom he met, especially the women scrubbing their chairs and benches in front of their doorsteps, as the calash with a swift dash of the spanking horses went splashing and dashing through the muddy street of the village of Izlegoshchi.

Ivan Petrovitch, anticipating the pleasant sensation of the tobacco, held the snuff between his thumb and finger all the way through the village, even till after they had got beyond the bad place at the foot of the hill, up which the coachman evidently could not drive without difficulty; he gathered up the reins, settled himself better in his seat, and shouted to the outrider to keep to the ice. When they had passed beyond the bridge and had got out of the broken ice and mud, Ivan Petrovitch, looking at two lapwings rising above the ravine, took his snuff, and, feeling that it was rather cool, he put on his gloves, wrapped himself up, sunk his chin into his high cravat, and said to himself, almost aloud, the word "*slavno*," glorious, which was his favorite expression whenever everything seemed good to him.

During the night the snow had fallen, and even when Ivan Petrovitch was going to church the snow had not wholly melted, but was soft; but now, although there was no sun, the snow was almost liquid, and along the highway, by which he had to drive for three versts before he reached the side road to Chirakovo, there were only gleams of snow on the last year's grass growing between the ruts. The horses trampled through the viscous mud on the black road. But for the fat, well-fed horses of his team it was no effort to draw the calash, and it seemed to go of itself, not only over the grass where the black tracks were left, but also through the mud itself.

"Ivan Petrovitch gave himself up to pleasant thoughts; he thought about his home, his wife, and his daughter.

"Masha will meet me on the steps, and with enthusiasm. She will see in me such a saint! She is a strange, sweet girl; only she takes everything to heart so. And the *rôle* which I have to play before her — the *rôle* of dignity and importance — has already begun to seem to me serious and ridiculous. If she only knew how much I stand in awe of her," he said to himself. "Well, Kato" — that was his wife — "will probably be in good spirits to-day — really in good spirits, and the day will be excellent. Not as it was last week, owing to those Proshkinsky peasant women. She is a wonderful creature. And how afraid of her I am. But what is to be done about it? She herself is not happy."

Then he recalled a famous anecdote about a calf; how a proprietor who had quarreled with his wife was one day sitting at his window and saw a calf gambling. "I would marry you," said the proprietor; and again he smiled, deciding everything puzzling and difficult, as was his wont, by a jest, generally directed against himself.

At the third verst, near the chapel, the postilion turned off to the left to take the cross-road, and the coachman shouted to him because he turned so short it struck the shaft horses with the pole, and from here on the calash rolled almost all the way down hill. Before they reached the house, the postilion looked at the coachman and pointed at something; the coachman looked at the lackey and also pointed at something. And they all gazed in one direction.

"What are you looking at?" asked Ivan Petrovitch.

"Wild geese," said Mikhaïla.

"Where?"

But, though he strained his eyes, he could not see anything.

"Yonder, there is a forest, and beyond is a cloud, and there between, if you will be good enough to look."

Still Ivan Petrovitch could not see anything. "Well, it is time for them. A week from to-day will be Annunciation."

"So it will."

"Well, go ahead."

At the little lodge Mishka jumped down from the foot-board and examined the road, then climbed back again, and the calash rolled smoothly along by the edge of the pond into the park, mounted the driveway, passed the ice-house and the laundry, from which the water was dripping, and skilfully rounding up stopped at the porch. The Chernuishefs' britchka was only just driving away from the yard. Immediately some people came hurrying down from the house: a surly-looking old man, Daniluitch, with side-whiskers, Nikola, Mikhaïla's brother, and the boy Pavlushka, and behind them a girl with large black eyes and red arms bare above the elbows, and also with open neck.

"Marya Ivanovna, Marya Ivanovna. Where are you? Here, your mamasha is getting anxious about you. Come," said the voice of the stout Katerina in the background.

But the little girl did not heed her; as her father expected, she seized him by the hand, and looked at him with a peculiar look.

"Tell me, papenka, have you had the sacrament," she asked, with a sort of terror.

"Yes, I have had the sacrament. Why, were you afraid that I was such a sinner that they would not let me have it?"

The little girl was evidently shocked at her father's levity on such a solemn occasion. She sighed, and as she went with him she held him by the hand and kissed it.

"Who has come?"

"It is young Chernuishef. He is in the drawing-room."

"Has mamma got up? What is she doing?

"Mamenka is better to-day. She is sitting down-stairs."

In the passage-way Ivan Petrovitch met the nurse Yevpraksia, his foreman Andreï Ivanovitch, and his surveyor, who was staying there to divide the land. All congratulated Ivan Petrovitch. In the drawing-room were sitting Luiza Karlovna Turgoni, for ten years a friend of the family, an *emigreé* governess, and a young man of sixteen, Chernuishef, with his French tutor.

THIRD FRAGMENT

(Variant of the First Chapter)

On the 14th of August, 1817, the sixth department of the Controlling Senate rendered a decision in the lawsuit between the "ekonom"[1] peasants of the village of Izlegoshchi and Prince Chernuishef, granting the land that was in dispute to the peasants.

This decision was unexpected and serious, and unfortunate for Chernuishef. The suit had been dragging along already for five years. Having been brought originally by the advocate of the rich and populous village of Izlegoshchi, it had been gained by the peasants in the District Court; but when Prince Chernuishef, by the advice of Ilya Mitrofanof, a solicitor, a domestic serf belonging to Prince Saltuikof, hired by him, appealed the case, he won it, and, moreover, the Izlegoshchi peasants were punished by having six of them, who had insulted the surveyor, sent to the mines.

After this, Prince Chernuishef, with a good-natured carelessness characteristic of him, was perfectly at ease, the more because he knew well that he had never "usurped" any land of the peasants, as it had been said in the peasants' petition. If any land had ever been "usurped" it had been done by his father, but since then more than forty years had passed away. He knew that the peasants of the village of Izlegoshchi

[1] *Ekonomichesky krestyanin* was formerly a peasant who belonged to a monastery and was subject to an ekonom or steward.

even without this land were prosperous, that they did not need it, and that they were good neighbors of his, and he could not understand why they were "mad" with him.

He knew that he had never injured any one, and that he had no wish to injure any one; he had always lived with charity to all and that was all he wanted to do, and so he did not believe that they wanted to do him any wrong: he detested litigation, and therefore he had not labored in the senate, notwithstanding the advice and admonition of his attorney, Ilya Mitrofanof. Having disregarded the term of the appeal, he lost the case in the senate, and lost it in such a manner that ruin stared him in the face. According to the decree of the senate not only were five thousand desyatins of land to be taken from him, but on account of his illegal use of the land he was obliged to pay the peasants 107,000 rubles.

Prince Chernuishef had had eight thousand serfs, but all his estates were mortgaged; he had many debts, and this decision of the senate ruined him together with all his great family. He had a son and five daughters. He woke up when it was too late to do anything in the senate. According to Ilya Mitrofanof he had one way of salvation; that was to petition the Emperor and appeal the case to the imperial council. For this it was necessary personally to address one of the ministers or one of the members of the council, or even — and this would be still better — the Emperor himself. Having decided on this plan of action, Prince Grigori Ivanovitch, in the autumn of 1817, left his beloved Studentso, where he always lived, and went with his whole family to Moscow. He went to Moscow and not to Petersburg, because during the autumn of that year the sovereign, with his court, and all his highest dignitaries, and a part of the Guard in which Grigori Ivanovitch's son served, was to be in Moscow for the ceremony of dedicating the cathedral of the Saviour in memory of the deliverance of Russia from the invasion of the French.

Even in August immediately after the receipt of the

horrible news of the decision of the senate, Prince Grigori Ivanovitch found himself in Moscow. His steward had been sent on in advance to make ready his private house on the Arbata; a baggage-train was sent on with furniture, servants, horses, equipages, and provisions. In September the prince, with his whole family in seven carriages drawn by his own horses, reached Moscow, and settled down in their mansion. His relatives and friends, who had come to Moscow from the country or from Petersburg, began to gather in Moscow in September; the Moscow life with all its gayeties, the arrival of his son, the coming out of his daughters, and the success of his eldest daughter, Aleksandra, the one blonde among all the dark Chernuishefs, so occupied and engrossed the prince, that notwithstanding the fact that he was spending there in Moscow all the remainder of his substance, — in case he had to pay his fine, — he kept forgetting his chief business, and was annoyed and bored when Ilya Mitrofanof mentioned it, and he kept putting off doing anything to further the success of his affairs.

Ivan Mironovitch Baushkin, the chief advocate of the muzhiks, who had carried the lawsuit through the senate with such zeal, who knew all the ways and means of dealing with the secretaries and head clerks, and who had so cleverly spent at Petersburg in the form of bribes the ten thousand rubles collected from the muzhiks, had also now put an end to his activity and had returned to the village; where, with the reward for his success and with the money not expended in bribes, he had bought a piece of woodland of a neighboring proprietor, and had established in it an office.[1] The lawsuit in the highest instance was at an end, and by good rights the affair should now take care of itself.

Of all those that had been entangled in this affair, the only ones who could not forget it were the six muzhiks, who had been for seven months in prison, and their families deprived of their head men. But there was nothing to be done about it. There they were in the Krasnoslobodsky prison, and their families were strug-

[1] *Izba-kontora.*

gling to get along without them. There was no one to petition. Even Ivan Mironovitch declared that there was nothing he could do in their behalf; that this was not an affair of the "mir" or of the civil court, but a criminal case. The muzhiks were in prison and no one was working in their behalf; only the family of Mikhaïl Gerasimovitch, especially his old woman, Tikhonovna, could not acquiesce in the fact that her "golden one," her old man, Gerasimuitch, was confined in prison with a shaven head. Tikhonovna could not remain in peace. She besought Mironuitch to work for her; Mironuitch refused. Then she resolved herself to go, and pray God to release her old man. The year before she had vowed to go on a pilgrimage to the saints, and yet for lack of leisure, and because she did not like to leave the house in the care of her sisters-in-law, who were young, she had postponed it for a year. Now that she had become poor, and Gerasimuitch was in prison, she remembered her vow. She let her household cares have the go-by, and with a deacon's wife of her village, she started in on her pilgrimage. At first they went to the district where the old man was in prison; they carried him some shirts, and thence they went to Moscow, passing through the governmental city.

On the way Tikhonovna related the story of her misfortune, and the deacon's wife advised her to petition the Tsar, who, she had heard, was to be at Penza, telling her what were the chances of pardon. When the pilgrims reached Penza they learned that the Tsar's brother, the Grand Duke Nikolaï Pavlovitch, and not the Tsar himself, had already come to Penza. Coming forth from the cathedral at Penza, Tikhonovna forced her way through the line, threw herself on her knees, and began to beg for her lord and master. The Grand Duke was amazed, the governor was angry, and the old woman was arrested. After a day's detention she was set free, and went on to Troïtsa. At this monastery Tikhonovna prepared for the sacrament, and made confession to Father Païsi. At confession she told all her misfortune, and confessed how she had tried to offer

her petition to the Tsar's brother. Father Païsi told her there was no sin in that, and that she was on the right track, and that it was no sin to petition the Tsar, and then he let her go. Also at Khotkovo she stopped with "an inspired woman,"[1] and this woman advised her to present her petition to the Tsar himself. Tikhonovna, on her way back with the deacon's wife, went to Moscow to visit the saints there. There she learned that the Tsar was in Moscow, and it seemed to her that God had commanded her to petition the Tsar. All she had to do was to get the petition written. At Moscow the pilgrims stopped at an inn. They asked for a night's lodgings; it was granted them. After supper the deacon's wife lay down on the oven, but Tikhonovna lay down on a bench, placing her *kotomka*, or birch-bark wallet, under her head, and went to sleep. In the morning, before it was light, Tikhonovna got up, awakened the deacon's wife, and came down into the court before the dvornik had called them.

"You are up early, baushka,"[2] said he.

"You see we are going to matins, benefactor," replied Tikhonovna.

"God go with you, baushka. Christ save you," said the dvornik; and the pilgrim women started for the Kreml.

After attending matins and mass, and having kissed the holy things, the two old women, with difficulty finding their way, went to the Chernuishefs'. The deacon's wife said that the old lady Chernuishef had strongly urged her to stop there, that she always received all pilgrims.

"There we shall find a man to help with the petition," said the deacon's wife, and the two pilgrims went wandering along the streets, asking the way as they went. The deacon's wife had been there once, but had forgotten where it was. Twice they were almost crushed, men shouted at them, and scolded them. Once a police offi-

[1] *Blazhennaya*, an eccentric, fanatic woman.
[2] *S Bogom, baushka; baushka* for *babushka*, old woman.

cer grasped the deacon's wife by the shoulder, and gave her a push, forbidding them to pass through the street on which they were walking, and directing them into a wilderness of lanes. Tikhonovna did not know that they were driven out of Vozdvizhenka for the very reason that the Tsar himself, of whom she was all the time thinking, and to whom she was going to write and present the petition, was to ride along that very street.

The deacon's wife, as always, walked heavily and painfully. Tikhonovna, as usual, went along with a free and easy gait, like a young woman. The pilgrims paused at the very gates. The deacon's wife did not know the place; a new izba had been built there; it had not been there before. But when the deacon's wife saw a well and pump at one corner of the dvor she recognized it. The dogs began to bark, and sprang toward the old women who appeared with staves.

"Don't be afraid, they won't hurt you," cried the dvornik. "Back, you rascals," said he to the dogs, waving his broom at them. "You see they are country dogs, and they hanker after country folks. Come round this way. God keeps the frost off."

But the deacon's wife, afraid of the dogs, pitifully mumbling, sat down on a bench at the gate, and asked the dvornik to take the dogs away. Tikhonovna, bowing low before the dvornik, and leaning on her staff, spreading wide her legs, tightly bound with leg-wrappers, halted near the other, calmly looking ahead, and waiting for the dvornik, who was coming toward them.

"Whom do you want?" asked the dvornik.

"Don't you know us, benefactor? Is n't your name Yegor?" asked the deacon's wife. "We have been on a pilgrimage, and here we have come to her excellency."

"You are from Izlegoshchi," said the dvornik. "Are you not the old deacon's wife? Well, well! Come into the izba. They will receive you. No one is ever turned away. But who is this woman?"

He pointed to Tikhonovna.

"I am from Izlegoshchi. I am Gerasim's wife; I

was a Fadeyef," said Tikhonovna. "I am from Izlegoshchi too."

"Is that so? I have heard your man is in jail. Is that so?"

Tikhonovna made no reply. She only sighed, and with a powerful gesture shifted her wallet and her shuba on her back.

The deacon's wife asked if the old princess was at home, and, learning that she was, asked to be taken to her. Then she asked after her son, who had been made a functionary, and through the prince's favor was serving in Petersburg. The dvornik could not answer her question, and he took them along a planked walk, across the yard, into the common izba. The old women entered the izba, which was full of people, women and children, young and old, domestic serfs, and there they bowed low toward the images. The laundress and the old princess's chambermaid immediately recognized the deacon's wife and immediately engaged her in conversation; they took her wallet from her, and sat her down at a table, and offered her something to eat.

Tikhonovna, meantime, crossing herself toward the images and greeting every one, stood by the door waiting to be invited in. At the very door, by the first window, sat an old man mending boots.

"Sit down, babushka; why do you stand? Sit down here and take off your wallet," said he.

"There is no room in there for her to sit down. Take her into the dark room,"[1] remarked some woman.

"Ah, here we have Madame de Chalmé," said a young lackey, pointing to the cocks on the back of Tikhonovna's zipun; "stockings and slippers too!" He pointed to her leg wrappers and bark shoes — novelties for Moscow.

"You ought to have some like them, Parasha."

"Come, come into the izba. I will show you the way."

And the old cobbler, thrusting in his awl, got up, but

[1] *Chornaya izba*, dark room of the hut, in contradistinction to the *chistaya izba*, the room where there is no oven.

as he caught sight of a young girl he called to her and bade her lead the old woman into the kitchen.

Tikhonovna not only paid no heed to what was said around her and about her, but she did not even hear it or notice it. Ever since she had left her home she had been impressed with the sense of the necessity of laboring in God's service, and with one other feeling which had come into her soul she knew not how — the necessity of presenting the petition. As she left the sitting-room where the people were, she went close to the deacon's wife, and bowing low said: —

"For Christ's sake, Matushka Paramonovna, don't forget my business. Ask if there is n't some man."

"What does the old woman want?"

"She has a grievance, and the people advise her to present a petition to the Tsar."

"Go straight to the Tsar and take it," said the joker of a lackey.

"Oh, fool, what an ill-bred fool," said the old cobbler. "I will teach you with my last, in spite of your good coat, not to make sport of old women."

The lackey began to call names, but the old man, not heeding him, led Tikhonovna into the kitchen. Tikhonovna was glad to be sent out from the crowded sitting-room and led into the "black" izba which the coachmen frequented. In the sitting-room everything was too clean and the people were all clean, and Tikhonovna did not feel at home. But in the coachmen's "black" izba it was like the hut of a peasant, and Tikhonovna was much more contented. The room was finished in spruce, and measured about twenty-one feet, and dark, with a great stove and with sleeping-benches and berths, and the newly laid floor was all trampled over with mud. When Tikhonovna entered the izba she found there the cook, a white, ruddy, fat peasant woman with the sleeves of her chintz dress rolled up, laboriously putting a pot into the oven with an oven-hook; then a fine-looking young coachman practising the balalaĭka, and a crooked-legged old man with a full, white, soft beard sitting on the sleeping-bench, with a skein of silk in his

mouth, sewing something delicate and beautiful; a ragged, dark young man in a shirt and blue trousers, with a surly face, chewing bread, was sitting on a bench near the stove, leaning his head on both hands, supported on his knees.

The barefooted girl with shining eyes ran with her light young legs in advance of the old woman, and opened the door, which was dripping with steam, and whined with her high-pitched voice: —

"Auntie Marina, Simonuitch sends this old woman to you and tells you to give her something to eat. She is from our parts, and has been making a pilgrimage to the saints with Paramonovna. They are giving Paramonovna some tea, and Vlasyevna sends this one to you."

The fluent little girl would have continued still longer talking glibly; the words seemed to flow from her mouth, and she evidently liked to hear her own voice. But Marina, who was sweating over the oven, not having settled to her satisfaction the pot of shchi which stuck half way in the oven, cried out angrily to her: —

"Now, that'll do. Stop your chatter; how can we feed any more old women; we can't even feed our own. Curse you," she cried, to the pot which almost tipped over as it moved from its hearth on which it had stuck.

But having once got her pot settled she looked round, and seeing the pleasant-faced Tikhonovna with her wallet and in regular country attire, kissing the cross and bowing low to the corner where the images were, she instantly felt compunction for her words; and, apparently bethinking her of the labors which tormented her, and putting her hand to her breast where below the collar-bone the buttons fastened her dress, she felt to see if one was unfastened, and, putting her hand to her head, she pulled back the knot of her kerchief which covered her well-oiled hair, and thus she stood leaning on her oven-fork waiting for the greeting of the pleasant-looking old woman. Having bowed for the last time to the image, Tikhonovna turned round and bowed to the three directions.

"God be your refuge! I wish your health,"[1] said she.

"We ask your blessing, auntie," said the tailor.

"Thank you, babushka, take off your wallet. There is a place for you," said the cook, pointing to the bench where the ragged man sat. "Make yourself at home, if you can. How cold it is growing, is n't it?"

The ragged fellow, scowling still more angrily, got up, moved along, and, still chewing his bread, kept his eyes fixed on the old woman. The young coachman bowed low, and, ceasing to strum his instrument, began to tune up the strings of his balalaïka, looking first at the old woman, then at the tailor, not knowing how to treat the old woman: whether with deference as it seemed to him proper, because the old woman wore the same kind of attire as his babushka and the mother of his house did — he was a postilion taken from among the muzhiks — or banteringly, as he would have liked to do, and as it seemed to him the suitable thing for him in his present position in his blue poddevka and his top boots. The tailor closed one eye and seemed to smile, pushing the skein of silk to one side of his mouth, and he also looked at her. Marina started to put in another pot, but, though she was buzy with her work, she looked at the old woman as she cleverly and deftly took off her wallet, and, endeavoring not to incommode any one, stowed it under the bench. Nastka ran to her and helped her; she took out from under the bench the boots which were in the way of the wallet.

"Uncle Pankrat," she cried, addressing the surly man, "I have your boots here; what shall I do with them?"

"The devil take them; throw them into the oven," said the surly man, flinging them into the farther corner.

"Come here, you wise one, Nastka," said the tailor; "the journeyman needs some one to pacify him."

"Christ save you, little girl. It is so comfortable," said Tikhonovna. "Only, my dear young man, we have disturbed you," said the old woman, addressing Pankrat.

"It is of no consequence," said Pankrat.

Tikhonovna sat down on the bench, taking off her

[1] *Bog pomotch, zdravstvuïte.*

zipun and carefully folding it up, and then she began to take off her foot-gear. First of all, she unwound her cords, which she had smoothed with the greatest solicitude for this pilgrimage; then she unwound carefully the lamb's-wool white leg-wrappers, and, carefully folding them, laid them on her wallet.

While she was unwinding the second leg, Marina awkwardly again caught the pot on something, and it spilt over, and she began once more to scold, grasping it with her oven-hook.

"Something has evidently burnt out the hearth. You ought to have it plastered," said Tikhonovna.

"How can I get it plastered? The chimney is not right; you put in two loaves of bread a day, you take out some, but the others are spoiled."

In answer to Marina's complaints about the loaves and the burnt-out hearth, the tailor stood up in defense of the conveniences of the Chernuishevsky house, and he explained how they had come suddenly to Moscow, that the whole izba had been built in three weeks, and the oven set up; and there were at least a hundred domestics, all of whom had to be fed.

"It's evident it is hard work. It is a great establishment," said Tikhonovna.

"And where did God bring you from, babushka?" asked the tailor.

And immediately Tikhonovna, while still continuing to divest herself of her wraps, told whence she came and where she had been and how she was on her way home. But she said nothing about the petition. The conversation went on uninterruptedly. The tailor learned all about the old woman, and the old woman learned about the awkward and handsome Marina, how her husband was a soldier and she had been taken as a cook, that the tailor himself was making kaftans for the coachmen, that the little girl who ran errands was the housekeeper's orphan, and that the shaggy, surly Pankrat was in the employ of the overseer, Ivan Vasilyevitch.

Pankrat left the izba, stumbling at the door; the tailor told how he was such a clownish peasant, but

to-day was particularly surly. That afternoon he had broken two of the overseer's windows, and that day they were going to flog him at the stable. Ivan Vasilyevitch is coming now to attend to the flogging. The little coachman was a countryman taken to be postilion,[1] and he is growing up, and is now getting his hand in to take care of the horses, and he plays the balalaïka, but he is not very skilled at it. ....

[1] The old peasant calls the German word *Vorreiter*, *foletorui*.

THE POWER OF DARKNESS

OR,

"IF BUT ONE CLAW IS CAUGHT THE WHOLE BIRD IS LOST"

(1886)

ACT I

CHARACTERS IN ACT I

PIOTR: A rich muzhik of forty-two, twice married, sickly.
ANISYA: His wife, thirty-two, fond of finery.
AKULINA: Piotr's daughter by his first marriage, sixteen, hard of hearing, half-witted.
ANYUTKA: His second daughter, ten years old.
NIKITA: A laborer in their employ, twenty-five years of age, rather gay.
AKIM: Nikita's father, an ill-favored but God-fearing muzhik of fifty.
MATRIONA: Akim's wife, fifty years of age.
MARINA: An orphan girl of twenty-two.

A large village in autumn. The scene represents PIOTR'S *ample establishment.* PIOTR *is sitting on the bench mending a horse-collar.* ANISYA *and* AKULINA *are spinning.*

SCENE I

PIOTR, ANISYA, *and* AKULINA (*the two women singing a duet.*)

PIOTR (*looking out of the window*). The horses are out again. Look there! they 'll kill the colt. Mikita, oh, Mikita. He 's deaf! (*He listens; then, addressing the women*) Hush! I can't hear anything.

(NIKITA'S *voice is heard from the side of the house next the yard.*)

NIKITA. What is it?

PIOTR. Drive in the horses.

NIKITA (*unseen*). I'll drive them in when I have time.

PIOTR (*shaking his head*). Oh, these laborers! If I were only well, I would never keep them another day. They are a trial.... (*He gets up and sits down again.*) Mikit!.... He does not heed me. I say, one of you go! Akul, you go and drive them in.

AKULINA. What, the horses?

PIOTR. What else do you suppose?

AKULINA. I'll go. (*She goes out.*)

SCENE II

PIOTR *and* ANISYA

PIOTR. Oh, he's a lazy fellow .... no good at all. He just turns his back on me.

ANISYA. You yourself are mighty lively!.... From the stove to the bench, and then you expect other folks to work.

PIOTR. I don't get much out of you, for you aren't at home more than once a year. Oh, what people!

ANISYA. You give out ten jobs at once and then scold. It's easy to lie on the oven and give orders.

PIOTR (*sighing*). If this sickness had not got hold of me, I would not keep him a day!

(AKULINA'S *voice behind the scene*, Pse! pse! pse! *The colt is heard neighing, and the horses gallop through the gates; the gates creak.*)

PIOTR. Talk small talk .... that's all he can do. It's a fact! he isn't worth keeping.

ANISYA (*imitating him*). No, he's not worth keeping. If you ever stirred yourself, you might talk.

Scene III

The Same, and Akulina

Akulina (*entering*). I got them driven in; it was hard work. Always that roan.

Piotr. Where is Nikita?

Akulina. Oh, Mikita? He 's in the street.

Piotr. What 's he standing there for?

Akulina. What 's he standing there for? He 's standing on the corner, chatting.

Piotr. Can't get anything out of her! Well, who 's he chatting with?

Akulina (*not hearing him*). What?

(Piotr *shakes his fist at* Akulina; *she sits down at her spinning.*)

Scene IV

The Same, and Anyutka

Anyutka (*running in: to her mother*). Mikita's father and mother have come for him. They are going to take him home and give him a wife, — let him rest awhile.

Anisya. What are you lying for?

Anyutka. Fact! May I die on the spot! (*Laughing.*) I just went by. And Mikita said: "Now good-by, Anna Petrovna.[1] Come and dance at my wedding. I 'm going to leave you," says he, and he laughed.

Anisya (*to her husband*). Don't seem to need *you* over much. He 's going away of his own accord. "I 'll drive 'em in," says he.

Piotr. Well, let him go; can't I find some one else?

Anisya. How about the money you advanced him?

(Anyutka *goes to the door and listens to what is said, and goes out.*)

[1] Anyutka is the diminutive of Anna; Petrovna signifies daughter of Piotr.

Scene V

Anisya, Piotr, *and* Akulina

Piotr (*frowning*). He can serve out the money next summer, easily enough.

Anisya. Yes, you 're glad to let him go so as to save his share of the bread. Yes, and all winter I shall have to work like a ram. Your girl does n't seem to like working very well, and you 'll be lying on the stove. I know you!

Piotr. What makes you wag your tongue to no good, without sense?

Anisya. The yard is full of cattle. You did n't sell the cow and you 've kept all the sheep for the winter — and who 's going to feed 'em and water 'em? and yet you want to let the hand go! I 'm not going to do a man's work for you. I 'll follow your example and lie on the stove all the time; let everything go to the dogs, if you want to. Do just as you please.

Piotr (*to* Akulina). Go and get the feed, will you — it 's time.

Akulina. Get the feed? Well, I will. (*She puts on a kaftan and takes a rope.*)

Anisya. I 'm not going to work for you. I 've done all I 'm going to. Do your own work.

Piotr. Now stop. What are you angry about? You 're just like a sheep.

Anisya. You 're a mad dog yourself. There 's no work to be got out of you, or any pleasure living with you. You make life a burden. You 're a rabid dog, fact!

Piotr (*spitting, and putting on his coat*). Shame on you! Lord save us! I 'll go and find out. (*Goes out.*)

Anisya (*following him up*). You rotten devil! ugly nose!

Scene VI

Anisya *and* Akulina

Akulina. Why are you scolding, dad?

Anisya. Now you shut up, you fool!

Akulina (*going to the door*). I know why you 're scolding him. You are a fool, a bitch. I 'm not afraid of you.

Anisya (*leaping to her feet and searching for something to thrash her with*). Look out! I 'll thrash you.

Akulina (*opening the door*). You 're a dog, you 're a devil, that 's what you are. You devil, dog, dog, devil! (*Runs out.*)

Scene VII

Anisya (*alone*)

Anisya (*pensively soliloquizing*). He said, "Come to the wedding!" did he? What idea have they in mind, I should like to know. Marry? Look here, Mikika, if this is your doings, then I 'll show my hand. .... I can't live without him! I 'll not let him go.

Scene VIII

Anisya *and* Nikita

Nikita (*entering and glancing around. Seeing that* Anisya *is alone, he quickly approaches her; in a whisper*). Just think, darling![1] what a shame! My father has come and wants to take me back. He commands me to go home. He says, "We 're going to marry you, and you 'll have to live at home, and that 's the end of it."

Anisya. All right! get married! What difference does it make to me?

Nikita. What do you say? I was counting on talking the matter over with her, and here she says, "Get married." What does she mean? (*Winking.*) Have you forgotten?

[1] He calls her *bratyets tui moï*; literally, little brother mine.

ANISYA. Yes, marry! What 's the good. ....

NIKITA. What makes you so pert? Would you mind; she won't even look at me! What is the matter with you?

ANISYA. So you mean to throw me over, do you? Well, if you want to throw me over, all right, I don't need you. Here 's the truth for you.

NIKITA. Now, that 'll do, Anisya! Would I forget you? Never in the world. As a matter of course, I will never throw you over. But this is the way I look upon it: I may get married, but I will come back to you all the same if only they don't keep me at home.

ANISYA. Very useful you 'd be to me after you were married!

NIKITA. I could never go against my father's will, anyway.

ANISYA. You blame it on your father; but it 's your own scheme. For a long time you 've been making up to that mistress of yours, Marinka. She put you up to this. Not for nothing was she gadding about here the other day.

NIKITA. Marinka! Much I care for her! .... How many of them will throw themselves at your head! ....

ANISYA. But why has your father come? You told him to! You have been deceiving me! (*She weeps.*)

NIKITA. Anisya, do you believe in God or not? I did not even dream of such a thing! I know nothing about it, indeed I don't,[1] and that 's the end of it. My old man concocted the whole thing out of his head.

ANISYA. But if you don't want to, they can 't make you, can they, as if you were a jackass?

NIKITA. Well, I reckon one can't go against one's father's will: I should not like to!

ANISYA. Simply say you won't, and stick to it!

NIKITA. One fellow did refuse, and they gave him such a thrashing by the district judge.[2] It is very simple, but I don't like it. They say it tickles. ....

[1] *Znat' nye znayo, vyedat' nye vyedayo,* quadruply emphatic.

[2] The judges elected by the commune, or *mir,* have control of the so-called *Volostnoye pravleniye,* which is an institution of the *Volost,* dealing with the collection of taxes and even family affairs.

ANISYA. Stop joking! Listen to me, Nikita: if you take Marinka as your wife, I don't know what I'll do to myself! I'll kill myself. I have sinned, I have broken the Commandment, and now there 's no turning back. If you go away now, I'll do something desperate.

NIKITA. Why should I go away? If I had wanted to go, I should have gone long ago. Some time since, Ivan Semyonuitch wanted me as his coachman, worst kind. And what a life it would have been! I did not go! That shows, I reckon, that every one likes me. If you did not love me, it would be a different matter.

ANISYA. Just remember this! The old man will be dying one of these days — and soon, too, I think; then we can make all our sins good. I shall have the right, then; you shall be master. ....

NIKITA. Why predict? What difference does it make to me? I work as much as I please. My master likes me, and his wife, of course, likes me too. And it is certainly not my fault if the women like me; it's a perfectly simple matter.

ANISYA. Will you love me?

NIKITA (*embracing her*). Won't I though! Just as you have always been in my heart. ....

SCENE IX

The Same, and MATRIONA

(MATRIONA *enters and stands a long time before the holy images, crossing herself.* NIKITA *and* ANISYA *start apart.*)

MATRIONA. Now, what I saw, I did n't see; what I heard, I did n't hear. He was having a little fun with the young woman! What of it? Even a calf will gambol, I believe. Why not have a little fun? Young things always do. But, my dear little son, the master is inquiring for you in the yard.

NIKITA. I came in after the ax.

MATRIONA. I know, I know what kind of an ax you

are after. It is always pretty near where the women are.

NIKITA (*stoops over and takes up an ax*). Well, mother,[1] tell me, is it true you are going to have me married? I reckon it is all nonsense. Besides, I don't want to, yet.

MATRIONA. Well, my darling boy, why should you get married. You just go on as you are; this is all the old man's doings. Go on, my son, we will talk it all over, without you.

NIKITA. It 's a curious state of things: first marry, and then no matter about it! I don't understand at all and that 's the end of it. (*Exit.*)

SCENE X

ANISYA *and* MATRIONA

ANISYA. Tell me, Aunt Matriona, do you really want him to marry?

MATRIONA. What should we marry him on, little berry.[2] You know how poor we are, don't you? Well, then, my silly old man talks at random: "He shall marry, yes, he shall marry." But his brains are n't deep enough to see how things stand. Horses, you know, don't trot away from their oats, or find good things away from good things! So it is here. Don't you suppose I see (*winking*) how things lie?

ANISYA. How hide anything from you, Aunt Matriona! You know everything that 's going on! I have sinned, I have fallen in love with your son.

MATRIONA. Well, you have told me some news! Aunt Matriona did not know it. Oh, my little girl, Aunt Matriona has been through the mill and been through the mill, and her eyes are keen. Aunt Matriona, I tell you, little berry, can see a fathom into the ground. I know a thing or two, little berry! I know why young wives give their husbands sleeping-powders. I have brought some. (*Untying a knot in her handker-*

[1] *Matushka.* [2] *Ydgodka.*

chief and taking out a paper of powders.) What I need to see, that I see; and what I don't need to know, that I don't know and don't know anything about. That's the way of it. And Aunt Matriona was once young herself. You see, she had to know a thing or two in order to get along with her old fool. I know all the seventy-seven tricks. I see, little berry, that your old man has been drying up more and more. What is there keeps life in him? Prick him with a fork, no blood would come out of him. Mark my word, you'll bury him this spring. You'll have to have some one to look after the place. Why would n't my little son do as a muzhik? He's not worse than other men. So it would n't be for my interest, would it, to take him away from a good job. Would I be an enemy to my own?

ANISYA. If only he would not leave us!

MATRIONA. And he shan't, my swallow! It's all a piece of stupidity. You know, my old man: he has nothing but a commonplace mind, but sometimes when he gets a notion into that pate o' his, he is as stiff as a post — you could never stir him.

ANISYA. What got him into this idea?

MATRIONA. Why, you see, little berry, the boy has a certain way with women — you know how it is yourself; besides, he is a handsome fellow; there's no doubt about that. — Well, you know, he was working on the railroad, and there was a young girl[1] there as a cook. Well, this girl began to chase after him.

ANISYA. Marinka?

MATRIONA. Yes, may the paralysis dash her to pieces! Whatever there was between them, my old man heard about it, either people told him, or she herself came and tattled ....

ANISYA. What a bold huzzy!

MATRIONA. And my man — the old fool — up and says, "Let him marry her, yes, marry her, and atone for the sin! We'll take the young fellow home," said he, "and marry him." I said everything I could think of

[1] *Dyevchenko*, diminutive of *dyevchina*, popular form of *dyeva*, a girl.

against it; no use. "Well," said I, "all right!" Let me try it another way. Fools like that have to be managed, little berry. All you 've got to do is to pretend. But when it comes to business, then you can make it go your own way. While a woman is flying down from the oven she has seventy-seven thoughts, you know, so how can he ever catch up with me? "All right," says I, "it 's a good idea, my dear old man. But we must think it all over. Let 's go," says I, "and see our little son and talk it over with Piotr Ignatuitch. And see what they will say." And so here I am.

ANISYA. Oh, auntie,[1] supposing he does? .... Supposing his father commands him to?

MATRIONA. Commands him? Stuff his commands up the dog's tail! Just don't you worry yourself; this thing shan't take place; I will sift it and strain it all with your old man and there won't be anything left. I just came with him for the sake of pretense. Why, here 's my little son living happily, he expects some good luck, and do you think I 'm going to marry him to a common street-wench? Do you think I 'm a fool?

ANISYA. Why! she came running after him even here, Marinka did! Would you believe it? .... Auntie, when they told me he was going to be married a knife seemed to go through my heart. But I think he 's fond of the girl.

MATRIONA. Oh, little berry, do you think he is a fool? The idea of his loving a homeless trollop! Mikishka,[2] you may be sure he is a sensible lad. He knows whom to love. So don't you worry yourself, little berry. We will never take him away from here, as long as he lives. And we won't marry him off either. You 'll favor us with a little money, so that we can get along.

ANISYA. It seems to me if Nikita should go away I should not care to live any longer.

MATRIONA. That 's the way with us when we 're young. Can't I understand it? A woman so full of life living with such an old boot! ....

[1] *Tyotushka*, diminutive of *tyotka*.

[2] Diminutive of Nikita.

ANISYA. If you only knew, auntie, how disgusting, how awfully disgusting *he* is — the ugly dog! It seems as if I could not bear to look at him.

MATRIONA. Yes, I know all about it. Just look here! (*In a whisper, glancing round.*) You see, I went to this old man after these powders. He gave me a couple of handfuls of the stuff. Just look here. "This," says he, "is a sleeping-powder. Give one," says he, "it will make a man sleep so sound," says he, "that you could walk over him." And says he, "If you mix it with his drink and give it to him, he'll never taste it, and yet it's awful strong. It's to be used seven times," says he, "a pinch at a time. Give it to him seven times." And says he, "she'll get her freedom very soon."

ANISYA. O-o-o! what is this?

MATRIONA. "There won't be any signs at all," says he. He asked a little ruble. "Could n't do it for less," says he. "Because, you may believe they are hard to get." I paid him, out of my own, little berry. I said to myself, "I'll run the risk and take them to Mikhaïlovna."

ANISYA. O-o! but maybe some harm will come from them.

MATRIONA. What harm can there be, little berry? If your muzhik was strong and well, but you know he's barely alive. He is n't going to live long anyway. There are lots of such cases.

ANISYA. O-okh! my poor little head! Auntie, I am afraid that this is a terrible sin. No, tell me what this powder is!

MATRIONA. Well, I can take them back.

ANISYA. Did you say they were both to be taken in water?

MATRIONA. Tea, he said, is better. "You could n't tell the difference," said he, "there is no smell or taste," said he. He is such a clever man.

ANISYA (*taking the powders*). O-o! my poor little head! I should never have come to such deeds, if it had n't been for the dog's life I have had to lead.

MATRIONA. Now don't forget the little ruble. I

promised to take it to the old man. It caused him a lot of trouble.

ANISYA. Of course it did. (*She goes to the chest and secretes the powders.*)

MATRIONA. Keep them out of sight, little berry, so that no one will know about them. But if any one touches them — God forbid! — remember they are for cockroaches .... (*taking the ruble*). You see they are good for cockroaches as well .... (*she suddenly breaks off speaking*).

SCENE XI

The Same, PIOTR *and* AKIM

(AKIM *enters and crosses himself before the images*)

PIOTR (*enters and sits down*). Well, what do you say, Uncle Akim?

AKIM. Well, Ignatuitch, I guess we'd better, yes, we'd better, that is I think we'd better .... why, if it had n't been for this .... his prank, of course, I could wish, you know .... I should like to have him work, you know. But, of course, if you would only .... it would be better ....

PIOTR. Good, very good. Sit down; let us talk it over. (AKIM *sits down.*) What is it? You want him to get married, do you?

MATRIONA. We can put off getting him married, Piotr Ignatuitch. We're too poor, as you know well, Ignatuitch. How could we get him married when we have n't enough for ourselves? The idea!

PIOTR. Decide what you think is best.

MATRIONA. Besides, there 's no hurry about his marrying. That kind of an affair 's not like a raspberry .... it won't fall off.

PIOTR. Well, it might be a good thing for him to marry.

AKIM. I should like, you know .... because, you know

of course. .... You see I found a job in the city, a job, you know .... fair price, of course.

MATRIONA. A job, I should say! To clean out vaults! He came home the other day. I simply vomited, vomited, that 's what I did, tfu!

AKIM. Well, of course, at the first, you know, she .... she threw up, ... the smell, but you get used to it, it 's a trifle, it 's nothing .... of course, it 's a little rough, but it 's fair pay .... but the smell, of course. It is n't worth while to be offended about. You can always change your clothes. Of course I should like .... to have Mikitka at home .... to have him wipe out his own fault, of course. Let him wipe out his own fault at home, and then I 'll take the job in the city. ....

PIOTR. You want your son at home; that 's natural. But how about the wages I advanced?

AKIM. Yes, that 's so, that 's so; of course, you tell the truth, I know it 's the rule, he who hires out, sells himself .... so let him work his time out, of course, ... but let him come long enough for the wedding, let him off for just a little, of course. ....

PIOTR. Well, that can be done.

MATRIONA. That 's where we disagree. I will open my heart before you, Piotr Ignatuitch, as before God. You decide between me and the old man. He keeps insisting on the lad marrying. But just ask whom he wants him to marry! If the bride were a decent one, do you suppose I 'd be an enemy to my own child; but the girl has a spotted reputation.

AKIM. Now that 's unjust, I tell you. You see you 're unjust, yes, unjust to the girl. Because, this poor girl has been wronged, yes, I tell you, wronged, yes, wronged by my son. Yes, this same girl, you know. ....

PIOTR. What was the wrong?

AKIM. Why, my son did it, don't you know, my son Nikita? My son Nikita did it, don't you know? ....

MATRIONA. You just stop talking; my tongue goes easier, let me tell the story! Before our son came to you, he worked, you know, on the railroad. And this girl, — a common creature they called Marinka, — she

worked there in the gang as cook and she took to Nikita. And this girl, this very same girl, accuses our son and charges him with deceiving her.

PIOTR. That does n't look well.

MATRIONA. She 's a lazy good-for-nothing, she goes about with men, she 's a regular prostitute.

AKIM. 'T ain't so, old woman, you know; 't ain't so, I tell you, 't ain't so.

MATRIONA. That 's all my old eagle can say: "'T ain't, 't ain't, 't ain't." He himself does n't know what he 's talking about! Piotr Ignatuitch, don't trust what I say, but ask any one about the girl; every one will say the same thing. She 's a homeless good-for-nothing.

PIOTR (*to* AKIM). Why, Uncle Akim, if what she says is true, there 's no reason why he should marry her. You see a daughter-in-law is n't like a shoe, you can't take it off your foot.

AKIM (*growing excited*). The old woman, I tell you, slanders the girl; 't ain't so, she slanders her. Because the girl 's a very good girl, a very good girl, of course she is, and I 'm sorry for her, very sorry for her, that 's what I am.

MATRIONA. Like the old woman Maremyana, he pities all the world, but his folks sit at home without anything to eat. He 's sorry for the girl, but he is n't sorry for his son! Better tie her around your neck and carry her around with you! Stop talking nonsense.

AKIM. But it is n't nonsense!

MATRIONA. Don't you fly out, just let me speak!

AKIM (*interrupting*). No, but it is n't nonsense. Of course, you turn it to suit yourself, — either about the girl, or about yourself, — you turn it your own way, just as seems best to you, but God, of course, will turn it back to suit himself. That is so.

MATRIONA. Ekh! what 's the use of wearing one's tongue out on you?

AKIM. The girl is industrious and decent, and of course, you know.... around herself, you know, of course. And that 's what, you know, we want, don't you know, in our poverty, and a wedding does n't cost very much.

But the main thing is, the girl has been wronged, an orphan girl, don't you know. She 's been wronged. ....

MATRIONA. Of course every girl says ....

ANISYA. Well, Uncle Akim, you 'd better listen to what the women say. They 'll tell you ....

AKIM. But God, how about God? Is she .... is n't the girl a human being? Of course she is in God's eye, don't you know. What do you think about that?

MATRIONA. You keep repeating yourself. ....

PIOTR. Well, Uncle Akim, you see you can't put any dependence on such girls. But the lad is alive. He 's right here. Send for him and ask if there 's any truth in it. Call the lad here. (ANISYA *gets up.*) Tell him his father wants him. (*Exit* ANISYA.)

SCENE XII

The Same, without ANISYA

MATRIONA. You see, friend, I have deliberated over this and spent my thought on it like water, and now let the lad speak for himself. And besides, you know that nowadays you can't force any one to marry. You 've got to get the lad's consent. He will never in the world want to marry her and degrade himself. In my opinion best let him live with you and serve you as his master. There 's no reason why we should take him home for the summer; we can hire some one. You just give us a ten-ruble note and let him live on with you!

PIOTR. You are too previous in your speech! Let us have things in order. Finish one thing first and then take up the next!

AKIM. Now see here, Piotr Ignatitch, I tell you one thing about this because, of course, you know, it sometimes happens so. You arrange things, you see, as best you can for yourself; but meantime, don't you know, you forget all about God. You think you know best .... you turn it your way, and lo! .... and you find you have loaded your neck, don't you know; we think we have every-

thing arranged for the best, but it turns out bad, if God is left out.

PIOTR. Of course that's so! We must remember God.

AKIM. Yes, it turns out bad, but if you act according to the law, according to God's way, somehow or other, don't you know, it cheers your heart up. Seems so, you know. So I thought, don't you see, I'd have the lad marry and save him from sin, don't you see. He'd be at home, don't you see, of course, as it ought to be according to law, and I, don't you see, could get my job in the city, of course. It's a job I'd like to have, don't you know. Fair pay. But it's best, don't you know, to act in God's way. You see, she's an orphan. For example, last summer some men got some wood of an overseer. They tried to cheat the overseer. They cheated the overseer, but don't you know, they could not cheat God, and so here....

SCENE XIII

The Same, NIKITA *and* ANYUTKA

NIKITA. Did you want me? (*Sits down and takes out his tobacco-pouch.*)

PIOTR (*gently, reproachfully*). Now say, don't you know what's becoming? Your father sends for you, and you dawdle with your tobacco and then you sit down! Come here and stand up.

(NIKITA *takes his stand by the table, leaning on it in a free and easy attitude, and smiling.*)

AKIM. Mikishka, a complaint, don't you know, a sort of complaint, you see, has been brought out against you, don't you know....

NIKITA. Who brought the complaint?

AKIM. A complaint? From the girl, from the orphan, don't you know, the complaint comes. From her, don't you know, from Marina, herself, from the girl, yes, a complaint, yes, yes.

NIKITA (*laughs*). That 's something remarkable! Who told you that — the girl herself?

AKIM. I 'm asking the question, yes, and it is your business, yes, it 's your business, don't you see, yes, to answer. Did you promise the girl, that is, you know, did you engage yourself to her, yes?

NIKITA. I don't understand at all what you are talking about. ....

AKIM. Don't you know, was there any foolishness, yes, any foolishness, don't you know, I mean foolishness between you and her?

NIKITA. Mighty little! Once in a while you joke with the cook when you have nothing else to do, and you play on the harmonica and she would dance to it. What foolishness is there in that?

PIOTR. Don't try to get out of it, Nikita! but answer your father's question in a straightforward manner.

AKIM (*solemnly*). Nikita! You may hide things from men; but you can't hide them from God. Yes, Mikita, think it over, I mean, don't you see, don't try to lie out of it! She is an orphan, don't you see, you can injure her, don't you know, the orphan, I mean, yes. Now you 'd better speak out frankly, yes.

NIKITA. Well, now, there 's nothing to say at all. I have told you all there is about it, and so I have nothing more to say. (*Growing excited.*) She may say what she pleases against the dead. But why does n't she say something about Fedka Mikishkin? I should think it was coming these days to be impossible to have a little fun. But she can say all she wants.

AKIM. Oi, Nikishka! Be careful. The truth will surely come out! Tell me, was it so or not?

NIKITA (*aside*). How they do go for me! (*To* AKIM.) I tell you I know nothing about it, I never had anything to do with her. (*Angrily.*) So help me Christ, I hope to die if I did. (*Crosses himself.*) I know nothing whatever about it. (*Silence;* NIKITA *grows still more heated.*) Why have you planned to make me marry her? Why! it would be a perfect scandal to do such a thing! Nowadays there are no laws to make a man marry against his

will. It 's perfectly simple! Besides, I have sworn that I know nothing about it.

MATRIONA (*to her husband*). There now, you stupid old fool of a blockhead, you have to believe everything that 's told you. All you 've done 's been to shame the poor boy. The best thing now 's to let him go on living as he 's been living with the master here. Perhaps the master will give us a ten-ruble note to help our poverty. But the time will come. ....

PIOTR. Well, what do you say, Uncle Akim?

AKIM (*clucks with his tongue to his son*). Remember, Nikita, the tears of the wronged, don't you know, are never spilt in vain, but always, don't you know, fall on the man's head. Look out for that.

NIKITA. You tend to your own affairs; look out for yourself! (*Sits down.*)

ANYUTKA. I must go and tell mother.[1] (*Runs out.*)

SCENE XIX

PIOTR, AKIM, MATRIONA, *and* NIKITA

MATRIONA (*to* PIOTR). That 's always the way, Piotr Ignatitch. He 's always getting things muddled. If he ever gets a notion into his head, there 's no getting it out; only it 's too bad to have bothered you for nothing. Keep the lad — he 's your man!

PIOTR. What do you say, Uncle Akim?

AKIM. Well, don't you see, I can't compel the lad, only 't ain't right. Yes, I only wanted ....

MATRIONA. You don't know yourself what a snarl you 're in. Let him stay on, as he 's staying now. The lad himself does n't want to go. And as far as he 's concerned, we can manage.

PIOTR. There 's one thing, Uncle Akim, if you take him away this summer, I shan't need him in the winter. If he 's going to stay, he must stay his year out.

MATRIONA. Then let him stay his year out. At

[1] *Mamushka.*

home, if we need any help, during the busy season, we can hire it; so let the lad stay, and you will give us a ten-ruble note, to tide us over.

PIOTR. Well, then, shall it be for a year?

AKIM (*sighs*). Well, then, I see, don't you know, I see it 's no use.

MATRIONA. Then it is a year, is it, from St. Mitri's Saturday.[1] You won't wrong him about his wages, and you 'll give us the ten-ruble note for now. Do help us out! (*Stands up and bows.*)

SCENE XV

The Same, ANISYA *and* ANYUTKA

(ANISYA *sits at one side*)

PIOTR. What say you? If it 's all right, then we 'll go to the tavern and wet the bargain. Come, Uncle Akim, we 'll have a little drink of vodka.

AKIM. I don't drink it, you know, I don't touch spirits.

PIOTR. Well, you can have a little tea.

AKIM. Tea, I confess I like tea. If it 's only tea.

PIOTR. Even the women will take a little tea. Come, Nikita, you drive in the sheep and gather up the straw.

NIKITA. All right! (*All go out except* NIKITA. *It grows dusky.*)

SCENE XVI

NIKITA (*alone*)

NIKITA (*lights a cigarette*). And so they keep saying, "Tell us, tell us how you amuse yourself with the girls." It takes a long time to tell such stories. "Marry her," they say! If I should marry them all, I should have to have a heap of wives! Much I need to get married! even as it is I live as well as a married man; men are jealous of me. But what was it drove me to swear be-

[1] St. Demetrius's Day is October 26 (O.S.).

fore the images! That took the wind out of their sails. But I 've heard it said, it is a terrible thing to swear to a lie. That 's all nonsense. It 's a very easy matter.

Scene XVII

Nikita *and* Akulina

Akulina (*enters in her kaftan, puts away a rope, takes off her things, and goes to the closet*). You might have been making a light!

Nikita. What for? So as to see you? I can see you as it is!

Akulina. Stop your nonsense!

Scene XVIII

The Same, and Anyutka

Anyutka (*runs in and speaks to* Nikita *in a whisper*). Nikita, go quick as you can. Some one 's asking for you as true as I am breathing!

Nikita. Who is it?

Anyutka. Marina from the railroad station. She is waiting behind the corner.

Nikita. You lie!

Anyutka. As true as I 'm breathing!

Nikita. What does she want?

Anyutka. She tells you to come. She says, "I must speak just one word to Nikita." I began to ask her what she wanted, but she would not tell me. Only she kept asking if it was true that you were going to leave us. But I told her it was not true, that your father wanted to take you home and make you get married, but that you refused and that you were going to stay with us another year. But she kept saying: "Send him to me, for Christ's sake, I must have a word with him," she insisted. She 's been waiting for you for a long time. Now go to her.

NIKITA. The devil take her, why should I go to her?

ANYUTKA. She says if you don't come she will come into the izba herself. As true as I 'm breathing, she says so.

NIKITA. Never you fear, she won't dare to come in.

ANYUTKA. And she wanted to know if they were going to marry you to Akulina.

AKULINA (*approaches* NIKITA *to get her spinning-wheel*). Marry whom to Akulina?

ANYUTKA. Nikita.

AKULINA. Indeed! and who says so?

NIKITA. You see that 's what people are saying. (*Looks at her and laughs.*) Tell me, Akulina, would you have me?

AKULINA. Have you? Perhaps I would have, some time ago, but I would n't now.

NIKITA. Why would n't you now?

AKULINA. Because you would n't love me.

NIKITA. Why would n't I?

AKULINA. Some one would n't let you. (*Laughs.*)

NIKITA. Who would n't let me?

AKULINA. Well, my stepmother would n't. She 's scolding all the time, and she 's watching you all the time.

NIKITA (*laughing*). Indeed! Well, you are a sharp eyes!

AKULINA. I? How can I help seeing? Am I blind? This very day she was abusing my father, just abusing him! She 's a thick-lipped hag! (*Goes to the closet.*)

ANYUTKA. Nikita! Just look! (ANYUTKA *looking out of the window.*) She 's coming. True as I am a-breathing. Here she is! I 'm off! (*Exit.*)

SCENE XIX

NIKITA, AKULINA (*in the closet*), *and* MARINA

MARINA (*enters*). Tell me now, what are you going to do for me?

NIKITA. What am I going to do? I am not going to do anything.

MARINA. Are you going to cast me off?

NIKITA (*angrily rising*). I should like to know what you came here for.

MARINA. Ah, Nikita!

NIKITA. You're wonderful creatures, that's a fact! What made you come?

MARINA. Nikita!

NIKITA. "Nikita!" Well, I'm Nikita! What do you want? Get you gone, I tell you!

MARINA. And so I see you throw me off; you are going to forget me!

NIKITA. Why should I remember you? You don't know yourself! There you stood behind the corner and sent Anyutka, and I didn't come. That shows I didn't want you; it's mighty plain. Now, be off with you!

MARINA. Didn't want me? It has come to that, has it? I had faith in you that you would love me. You ruined me, and now you don't want me.

NIKITA. What you say is all nonsense. You have been talking to my father. Be kind enough to go away!

MARINA. You know perfectly well that I never loved any one else but you. Whether you marry me or not I should not be angry with you, I have nothing to reproach myself about concerning you, and why have you ceased to love me? Why is it?

NIKITA. There's nothing whatever for you and me to talk over.[1] Now go! You girls are dull about some things.

MARINA. It does not hurt me so much that you broke your promise to me when you promised to marry me, — but that you have ceased to love me. And it does not hurt me so much that you have ceased to love me, as that you have taken some one else in my place, and I know who it is.

NIKITA (*advancing toward her threateningly*). Ekh! there is no sense in talking with such a girl; you can't

[1] *Perelivat' iz pustova f porozhnoye*, to decant from empty into empty.

understand reason. Go, I tell you, or you 'll make me mad!

MARINA. Make you mad? What? would you strike me? Strike me, then! Why do you turn away your face? Ekh, Nikita!

NIKITA. If any one should come, it would look bad. What is the use of such talk?

MARINA. And so this is the end of it! it means it is all over! You tell me to forget. Well, remember, Nikita, I treasured my maiden honor dearer than my eyes. You ruined me, you deceived me. You have no pity on an orphan girl (*she weeps*), you have forsworn me. You have killed me, but I will not bear you any malice. God forgive you. If you find a better wife, you will forget me; if you find a worse one, then you will remember me. Yes, you will remember me, Nikita! Good-by, even as it is! Oh, how I have loved you! Good-by, for the last time! (*She tries to embrace him, and seizes him by the head.*)

NIKITA (*avoiding her*). Ekh! I have had enough of your talk! If you won't go, then I will; get out of here!

MARINA (*screams*). You are a wild beast! (*On the threshold.*) God will not grant you happiness!

(*Exit, weeping.*)

SCENE XX

NIKITA *and* AKULINA

AKULINA (*reënters from closet*). You are a perfect dog, Nikita.

NIKITA. What do you mean?

AKULINA. How she screamed! (*Weeps.*)

NIKITA. What are you crying for?

AKULINA. What am I crying for? You have wronged her. You would wrong me in the same way .... you dog! (*Goes into the closet.*)

Scene XXI

Nikita (*alone*)

Nikita (*a silence*). It 's all a muddle! I love these women as I do sugar. But if you commit a sin with them, ... it makes a row!

Curtain

ACT II

CHARACTERS IN ACT II

Piotr.	Nikita.
Anisya.	Matriona.
Akulina.	A Woman of the neighborhood.
Anyutka.	Populace.

The stage represents the street and Piotr's *izba at the spectator's left, the izba in two parts, the porch and steps in the center; at the right the gates and section of the dvor. At the edge of the dvor* Anisya *is stripping hemp. Since the first act six months have elapsed.*

Scene I

Anisya (*alone*)

Anisya (*pauses and listens*). He 's moaning again. He must have crawled down from the oven.

Scene II

Anisya, *and* Akulina (*entering with her buckets on the yoke*)

Anisya. He is calling! Go and see what he wants! Don't you hear him bawling?

AKULINA. But why don't you go?
ANISYA. Go, I say!

(AKULINA *enters the izba.*)

SCENE III

ANISYA (*alone*)

ANISYA. He has tormented me to death! he won't tell me where the money is or anything else. Lately he was in the entry; he must have hid it there. And now I don't know where it is. I'm thankful he's afraid to part with it: it's all in the house. If I could only find it. It wasn't on him yesterday. And now I don't know where it is at all. He's tormented me to death!

SCENE IV

ANISYA, *and* AKULINA (*who enters, wrapping her handkerchief round her head*)

ANISYA. Where are you going?
AKULINA. Where? Well, he wanted me to fetch Aunt Marfa. "Bring my sister to me," says he. "I'm dying," says he; "I have something I must tell her."
ANISYA (*aside*). He is sending for his sister! Oh, my poor head! O-o! It must be he is going to give her the money. What shall I do? Oh! (*To* AKULINA.) Don't go! Hold on, where are you going?
AKULINA. After auntie.
ANISYA. Don't you go, I say, I'll go myself. You go down to the river with the washing. Or else you won't have time before evening.
AKULINA. But he commanded me to.
ANISYA. Go where I tell you; I myself will go after Marfa. Take down the shirts from the fence.
AKULINA. The shirts? But see here, you won't go. I'm afraid. He told me to.

ANISYA. I have told you I will go. Where is Anyutka?

AKULINA. Anyutka? She's watching the calves.

ANISYA. Send her to me; they probably won't get lost.

(AKULINA *collects the washing and exit.*)

SCENE V

ANISYA (*alone*)

ANISYA. If she does n't come, he 'll be mad. If she comes, he 'll give her the money. Then all my pains will be lost. I don't know what to do about it! My head is splitting. (*She continues to work.*)

SCENE VI

ANISYA, *and* MATRIONA (*enters with a staff and a small bundle as if for traveling*)

MATRIONA. God be your help, little berry!

ANISYA (*looks around, throws down her work, and claps her hands with joy*). I was not expecting this, auntie. God sent you just in time!

MATRIONA. Well, how is it?

ANISYA. My mind is in a perfect whirl! It 's misery.

MATRIONA. They say he 's still alive?

ANISYA. Don't speak of it! He 's neither dead nor alive!

MATRIONA. Whom has he given his money to?

ANISYA. He has just sent after Marfa, his sister. It must be about the money.

MATRIONA. Probably. Has n't he give it to some one without your knowing about it?

ANISYA. No, indeed! I watch him like a hawk.

MATRIONA. But where can it be?

ANISYA. He will not tell. I can't worm it out of him. He hides it sometimes in one place, sometimes in another,

and Akulina manages to keep in my way all the time. The fool, she is always spying and on guard. Oh, my poor head! I have been tormented.

MATRIONA. Okh! little berry, he will be giving his money out of your hands, and you will mourn all your days. They 'll be turning you out of house and home without a thing. You 've worn yourself out, my heart's darling, worn yourself out living all your days with an old curmudgeon, and when you are a widow you 'll be nothing but a beggar!

ANISYA. Oh, don't speak of it, auntie! My heart is sick and I don't know what to do, and there 's no one to advise me. I have spoken to Nikita, but he 's afraid to take hold of this thing. Only last evening he told me it was under the floor.

MATRIONA. Well, did you crawl under?

ANISYA. I could n't. He 's there himself. I notice he sometimes carries it on him and sometimes hides it.

MATRIONA. Remember, my dear girl, if you miss your stroke this time you can never set it right again. (*In a whisper.*) Tell me, did you give him the strong tea!

ANISYA. O-o! (*She is about to reply, but sees a neighbor and holds her tongue.*)

SCENE VII

The Same, and a woman of the neighborhood (*who passes the izba and listens to the groans from within*)

WOMAN[1] (*to* ANISYA). Neighbor! Anisya! say, Anisya! Your man seems to be calling you.

ANISYA. He is always coughing like that. It sounds as if he were calling. He 's very sick.

WOMAN (*approaches* MATRIONA). How are you, granny,[2] where are you from?

MATRIONA. Oh, I came from home, dear heart. I came to see my young son. I have brought him some shirts. You see, one must look after one's children.

[1] *Kuma*, a gossip. [2] *Baushka*, for *babushka*.

WOMAN. That 's a fact. (*To* ANISYA.) I was going to bleach my linen, but I think it 's rather early. Folks have n't begun yet.

ANISYA. What is your hurry?

MATRIONA. Tell me, have they administered the communion yet?

ANISYA. Yes, the priest was here yesterday.

WOMAN (*to* MATRIONA). I had a glimpse of him yesterday, too, my dear;[1] his soul was just hanging by a thread. How thin he 's grown! And several days ago, he was at the point of death; they 'd put him under the images. And they were getting ready to weep over him and wash his corpse.

ANISYA. He 's come to life again and got around. He 'll be out now.

MATRIONA. Well, shall you give him extreme unction?

ANISYA. Folks advise me to. If he 's alive, we 'll send for the priest to-morrow.

WOMAN. Oh! it must be dull for you, Anisyushka, is n't it? 'T ain't for nothing, folks say: 'T is not the sufferer that suffers, but the looker-on.

ANISYA. If it would be only one thing!

WOMAN. To be sure! he 's been dying-like for a whole year. It just ties our hands.

MATRIONA. Being a widow is bitter business. It 's well enough, if you 're young; but who 'll look after you if you 're on in years! Old age is a trying stage! At least it is in my case. I have n't come very far, but I 'm half dead, I can't feel my feet. .... Where 's my son?

ANISYA. Plowing. But come in, I will start the samovar, and you can cheer up your spirits with a little tea.

MATRIONA (*sits down*). Well, I 'm just dead tired, dearie. As for giving him extreme unction, you certainly ought to do it. Folks say it is a good thing for the soul.

ANISYA. Yes, we 'll send for the priest to-morrow.

MATRIONA. That 's much better. We 've had a wedding at our village, girlie!

[1] *Matushka moya.*

WOMAN. What 's that! In spring?

MATRIONA. Well, you see, the proverb is not without sense: When a poor man marries even the night is short. Semyon Matveyevitch has taken Marinka.

ANISYA. Well, she seems to have found luck, somehow!

WOMAN. I suppose he 's a widower with children?

MATRIONA. Four! What sensible woman would do such a thing! Well, he took her as she was. She was glad enough! They drank their wine, though the glass was broken and they spilt some of it.

WOMAN. Just think of it! Did it make talk? Has her husband got any property?

MATRIONA. They manage to live so far.

WOMAN. Strange enough that any one would go and marry where there are children! Now, how would it be with our Mikhaïlo! That muzhik, my dear....

A MUZHIK'S VOICE. Hey, Mavra! what the devil 's become of you? Go and drive in the cow.

(*Exit the* WOMAN.)

SCENE VIII

ANISYA *and* MATRIONA

MATRIONA (*speaks in an even voice as long as the neighbor is in sight.*) They are married, girlie, thank goodness, and at least my old fool won't be thinking of her for Mikishka any more. (*She suddenly changes her voice to a whisper.*) She 's gone! I say, did you give him that tea to drink?

ANISYA. Don't mention it. It would be better if he died a natural death. As it is, he does n't die at all. I 've laden my soul with a sin! O-oh, my poor head! Why did you give me those powders?

MATRIONA. What powders? They were only sleeping-powders, girlie; what harm in giving them? No harm from them!

ANISYA. I 'm not speaking about the sleeping-powders, but about the others, those white ones.

MATRIONA. Why those, little berry, were only medicine!

ANISYA (*sighs*). I know, but I feel troubled. He has tormented me.

MATRIONA. Tell me, how much did you use?

ANISYA. I gave it to him twice.

MATRIONA. Tell me, did he notice it?

ANISYA. I myself touched my lips to his tea; it tasted a little bitter. But he drank it with his tea and he said, "Even my tea is repulsive to me!" I said, "Everything tastes bitter to a sick man." It filled me with dread, auntie.

MATRIONA. But don't think about it; when you think about it you feel worse.

ANISYA. It would have been better if you had not given them to me and led me into sin. Whenever I remember it, it harrows up my soul. Why, why did you give them to me?

MATRIONA. What are you talking about, little berry? Christ be with you! What are you charging me with now? Look here, girlie, don't you shift the blame where it don't belong.[1] If anything happens, I wash my hands of it; I know nothing, absolutely nothing. I will kiss the cross that I never gave any powders, and never saw any, and never heard that there were such things as powders. Think it over, girlie. We have been talking about you lately, how tormented you have been, poor heart. Your stepdaughter a fool and your muzhik rotten, — one long misery! With such a life what would n't one do?

ANISYA. That is so, I don't deny it. My life is such that it leaves me with nothing else to do but either hang myself or choke him! Is this living?

MATRIONA. That's just the point! It's no time to be gaping. Someway or other, you must hunt up that money, and give him the drink.

ANISYA. O-oh, my poor head! And what am I to do now? I'm sure I don't know, and I'm frightened; it would be better if he should die a natural death. I don't like to have this thing on my soul.

[1] Literally, from a sick head to a well one.

MATRIONA (*angrily*). But why does n't he tell you where his money is? He won't take it with him, will he? He 'll have to leave it when it won't do any one any good. Is there any sense in that? God have mercy! all that money wasted! Is n't that a sin? What is he doing? Why don't you watch him?

ANISYA. I 'm sure I don't know. He has tormented me.

MATRIONA. Why don't you know? The matter is plain enough. If you miss your stroke now, you 'll regret it as long as you live. He'll be giving the money to his sister and you 'll be left!

ANISYA. O-okh! he was just sending for her; I must go and get her.

MATRIONA. Yes, go if you want, but first start the samovar. We will give him some tea to drink, and then we two will hunt for the money. We 'll find it, never fear.

ANISYA. O-o! suppose something were to happen?

MATRIONA. What might happen? What do you expect? Do you want to have that money under your very eyes, and then let it fall out of your hands? Do what I say.

ANISYA. Well, I 'll go and start the samovar.

MATRIONA. Go, little berry, do the best you can so as not to regret it afterward. Things are as they are. (ANISYA *starts to go.* MATRIONA *calls her back.*)

MATRIONA. There 's one thing; don't tell Nikitka about all this. He is rather foolish; God forbid he should learn about the powders! God knows what he would do. He 's very tender-hearted. You know, he could never kill a hen. So don't you tell him. It would be a misfortune; he would not approve of this.

(*She stops in horror; for on the threshold appears* PIOTR.)

Scene IX

The Same, and Piotr

Piotr (*holding by the wall, crawls out on the porch, and calls in a feeble voice*). You never come when you are called. O-okh! who is here?

Anisya (*comes out from behind the corner*). Why do you come crawling out? You'd better lie where you were lying.

Piotr. Tell me, has the girl gone after Marfa? I'm in distress..... Oh, would that death would come soon!....

Anisya. She's had no time as yet; I sent her down to the river. Give me time, I'll go myself as soon as I get the work done.

Piotr. Send Anyutka! Where is she? Okh! I'm in distress. Okh! I'm dying.

Anisya. I have already sent for her.

Piotr. Okh! Where is she?

Anisya. Wherever she is, the paralysis smash her!

Piotr. Okh! I can't bear it! I'm all on fire inside. It's like a worm boring. Why have you left me alone like a dog? And no one to give me a drink. Okh!.... Send Anyutka to me.

Anisya. Here she is. Anyutka, go to your father.

Scene X

The Same, and Anyutka (*who comes running in as* Anisya *goes around the corner*)

Piotr. Go to your Aunt Marfa! Okh! tell her your father wants her. I must see her.

Anyutka. Anything else?

Piotr. Wait! Tell her to come quick; tell her I'm just dying. O-oh!

Anyutka. Only let me get my handkerchief, and I'll go in a jiffy. (*Exit, running.*)

Scene XI

Piotr, Anisya, *and* Matriona

Matriona (*winking*). Well, girlie, remember what you 've got to do. Go into the izba and hunt everywhere. Search as a dog searches for fleas; turn everything over, and I 'll manage to search him.

Anisya (*to* Matriona). Somehow or other I feel much bolder with you. (*Goes to the porch. To* Piotr.) Shall I start the samovar for you? And Aunt Matriona has come to see her son. You shall have tea together.

Piotr. All right, get it ready.

(*Exit* Anisya *into izba.*)

Scene XII

Piotr *and* Matriona

(Matriona *approaches the porch*)

Piotr. How are you?

Matriona. Good-day, benefactor. How do you do, dear friend? I can see you are under the weather. And even my old man pities you. Go, says he, and find out. He sent his greeting. (*Bows several times.*)

Piotr. I am dying.

Matriona. Well, as I look at you, Ignatuitch, it 's plain sickness does not wander off in the forest, but comes among men. You 're all wasted away, dear heart, all wasted away, I can see by looking at you. Sickness does not add to one's beauty, now does it?

Piotr. My death is at hand.

Matriona. Well, Piotr Ignatuitch, 't is God's will! They 've given you the communion, they will give you supreme unction, if God permits. Your wife is a sensible woman, glory be to God, and she will give you a good funeral and have prayers said for you, all in a decent way. And my little son, meantime, will help about the house.

PIOTR. No one to leave my estate to. Wife slack and occupied with trifles. You see I know all about it.... I know! The girl half-witted and young besides! I have got an estate, and now there's no one to look after it, and I'm so sick! (*He sobs.*)

MATRIONA. Well, if you have any money or anything you can bequeath it....

PIOTR (*to* ANISYA *in the entry*). Tell me, has she gone?

MATRIONA (*aside*). There, he still remembers!

ANISYA (*in entry*). She's just gone. Do go back into the izba, and I will help you.

PIOTR. Let me sit here for the last time. The air is so stifling inside.... It distresses me.... Okh! my heart is all on fire.... If death would only come!

MATRIONA. Unless God takes the soul, the soul itself can't go; God rules in life and in death, Piotr Ignatuitch. You can't even foretell your own death. It might be you'd get up even now. There was a case like yours in our village; the man was on the point of death....

PIOTR. No! I feel that I shall die to-day, I feel it. (*He leans back and closes his eyes.*)

SCENE XIII

The Same, and ANISYA

ANISYA (*enters*). Well, are you coming or not? I can't keep waiting for you. Petra! say, Petra!

MATRIONA (*steps out and beckons to* ANISYA). Well, how was it?

ANISYA (*comes down from the steps and joins* MATRIONA). No use!

MATRIONA. Have you hunted everywhere? Under the floor?

ANISYA. No, it's not there, either; maybe it's in the shed.[1] He was crawling about there yesterday.

[1] *Punka*, diminutive of *punya*, ordinarily the fodder-shed, but often used in summer as a sleeping-room by the muzhik.

MATRIONA. Search, search with all your might. Lick it up with your tongue. I'm perfectly certain he'll die to-day; his nails are blue, his face is earth-color. Did you set the samovar going?

ANISYA. It is almost boiling.

SCENE XIV

The Same, and NIKITA

NIKITA (*enters from the other side, if possible riding on horseback up to the gates, does not see* PIOTR. *Addressing his mother*). How are you, matushka; all well at home?

MATRIONA. Thank the Lord God, we are alive, since we get our daily bread.

NIKITA. Well, how do you find the master?

MATRIONA. Hush, there he is! (*She points to the porch.*) Well, let him sit there. What is it to me?

PIOTR (*opens his eyes*). Mikita, O Mikita! come here! (NIKITA *approaches.* ANISYA *whispers with* MATRIONA.) Why are you back so early?

NIKITA. I have finished plowing.

PIOTR. Did you plow the patch beyond the bridge?

NIKITA. 'T was too far to go there.

PIOTR. Too far! It will be still farther from the house. You'll have to go there on purpose. You might have made one job of it. (ANISYA, *without showing herself, listens.*)

MATRIONA (*approaches*). Oh, my son, why don't you try to please your master? The master's ailing, and trusts to you; you ought to serve him as if he were your own father; strain every nerve, and serve him as I have bidden you.

PIOTR. Then you may .... okh! .... you may dig .... dig the potatoes; the women .... oh .... they 'll sort them.

ANISYA (*to herself*). I think I have found where it is. He wants to get rid of all of us; he must have the money on him now. He wants to hide it somewhere.

PIOTR. And then .... o-okh! .... the time will come

to sow them, and they 'll rot. .... Okh! I can't stand it! (*Gets up.*)

MATRIONA (*runs to the porch and helps* PIOTR). Do you want to be led into the izba?

PIOTR. Yes, lead me in. (*Pauses.*) Mikita!

NIKITA (*gruffly*). What more do you want?

PIOTR. I shall not see you again .... I shall die this day. .... Pardon me for Christ's sake, pardon me if I have sinned before you .... if in word or deed, I have done you any injury .... both may have been. Pardon me!

NIKITA. What is there to pardon, we are all sinners.

MATRIONA. Ah, my dear son, just think!

PIOTR. Forgive me for Christ's sake. (*Weeps.*)

NIKITA (*snuffles*). God will forgive, Uncle Piotr. I have nothing to complain of against you, I have never seen any harm in you. You must forgive me, maybe I am more to blame toward you. (*Weeps.* PIOTR *exit, whimpering.* MATRIONA *supports him.*)

SCENE XV

NIKITA *and* ANISYA

ANISYA. Oh, my poor head! There is some hidden meaning he has, that is evident. (*Goes to* NIKITA.) You said the money was under the floor .... it is n't there.

NIKITA (*makes no reply, weeps*). He never did me any harm, nothing but good, and what have I done for him?

ANISYA. Now hush up! Where is the money?

NIKITA (*angrily*). Who knows anything about it? Hunt for it yourself!

ANISYA. Why are you so painfully compassionate?

NIKITA. I 'm sorry for him. How sorry I am! How he wept! E-ekh!

ANISYA. What a tender-hearted fellow you are. He treated you like a dog, like a dog, I say, and he just ordered me to drive you out of the house. You 'd better feel sorry for me!

NIKITA. Why should I pity you?

ANISYA. He 'll die, and hide the money.

NIKITA. Never fear! he won't hide it.

ANISYA. Okh! Nikitushka! He has sent for his sister, he 's going to give it to her. It will be a misfortune to us! How shall we live if he gives away the money? They will turn me out of house and home. You 'd better be helping me! Did n't you say he was crawling in the shed last evening?

NIKITA. I saw him coming from there, but where he hid the money I have n't the least idea.

ANISYA. Oh, my poor head! I will go and look for it there.

(NIKITA *steps aside.*)

SCENE XVI

The Same, and MATRIONA

MATRIONA (*comes out from the izba, goes down the steps to* ANISYA *and* NIKITA, *in a whisper*). Don't go; the money 's on him; I felt of it; it 's attached to a string.

ANISYA. Oh, my poor head!

MATRIONA. If you don't look now, search for it on the eagle, on the right wing![1] Your sister 'll be coming, and then good-by to it!

ANISYA. And if she comes, he will give it to her. Then what shall we do? Oh, my head!

MATRIONA. What shall you do? Just you look here! The samovar is boiling. Go and make the tea and pour into it (*in a whisper*) all the rest of the powder from the paper, and give it to him. When he has drunk the tea, then search him. Never you fear, he won't tell on you.

ANISYA. Oh, I 'm afraid.

MATRIONA. Don't say anything about this, but just look alive. I 'll keep the sister if she comes. Don't make any mistakes. Get hold of the money, and bring it here, and Nikita will hide it.

ANISYA. Oh, my head! How shall I accomplish it, and .... and ....

[1] Russian proverb.

MATRIONA. I tell you, don't say a word; do as I tell you. — Mikita!

NIKITA. What?

MATRIONA. You stay here, sit down on the terrace, if anything.... there may be some work for you.

NIKITA (*waves his hand*). These women are always scheming! They make me tired, and that's the end of it! Now I'll let you do what you want to by yourselves, and I'll go and dig potatoes.

MATRIONA (*detaining him by the arm*). I tell you, wait!

SCENE XVII

The Same, and ANYUTKA

ANISYA. Well?

ANYUTKA (*entering*). She was in her daughter's garden; she'll be here immediately.

ANISYA. When she comes, what shall we do?

MATRIONA. Make haste; do what I command you. (*To* ANISYA.)

ANISYA. I no longer know what I am doing. I know nothing at all. My mind is all in a whirl Anyutka! Go, little daughter,[1] go to your calves; I'm afraid they have gone astray. Oh, my courage is all gone!

MATRIONA. Go on, why don't you; the samovar'll be boiling over, I'm afraid.

ANISYA. Okh, my poor head!

SCENE XVIII

MATRIONA *and* NIKITA

MATRIONA (*approaching her son*). Well, little son (*she sits down next* NIKITA *on the earth embankment*), you must think also of your affairs, and not let them go at loose ends.

NIKITA. What affairs?

[1] *Donyushka*, affectionate diminutive of *dotch*, daughter.

MATRIONA. Why, how you are going to live in the world.

NIKITA. How I 'm to live in the world? I shall live as other men do.

MATRIONA. The old man is surely going to die to-day.

NIKITA. If he dies, may the kingdom of Heaven be his! What is that to me?[1]

MATRIONA (*all the time she is speaking she keeps looking at the porch*). Ekh! little son! The living must think of living! Here, little berry, much brains is required. You 'd hardly think it, but I 've been running all over creation in your behalf. My legs are all tired out in doing this job for you. But don't you forget what I 've done for you.

NIKITA. What have you been working about?

MATRIONA. About your affairs; yes, about your interests. If you don't attend to things in good season, they go wrong. You know Ivan Moseïtch. Well, I went to see him. You see I have been doing some work for him, and I sat down and we had a talk. And says I to him, "Moseïtch, decide one matter for me. For instance," says I, "a muzhik is a widower, and he 's married a second wife; and suppose he has children, a daughter by his first wife and a daughter by his second wife. Now," says I, "suppose he dies; could his widow marry another man and live on his estate? And," says I, "could this man marry off the two daughters and remain the master of the place?" — "Yes," says he, "only it would make considerable trouble," says he; "it can be managed if there 's money," says he, "but without money nothing could be done."

NIKITA (*laughs*). It 's easy enough to say, "Just pay out money." Everything requires money.

MATRIONA. Well, little berry, I told him just how things stood. "First thing," says he, "your little son wants to be inscribed in that village, and money 's needed

[1] *Pomret, tsarstvo nyebyesnoye. Mnye-to-chto?* This reply of Nikita's well illustrates the condensed staccato utterance of the peasant talk. Literally it is: "Dies, Tsardom of Heaven. To me, what?" Often a long and complicated concept is hidden in the phrase *to-to*, which means this-this, the contracted form of which, *tayo*, constitutes a large part of Akim's limited vocabulary. — TR.

for that — he 'll have to treat the elders. Of course," says he, "they 'll sign the papers. Everything," says he, "must be done intelligently." Just look here (*takes a paper out of her handkerchief*), here 's a document he wrote out. Now you read it, you 're up to it.

(NIKITA *reads*, MATRIONA *listens.*)

NIKITA. The document is an agreement, that 's all. It don't take much wisdom to do that.

MATRIONA. Now listen to what Ivan Moseïtch said: — "Above all," says he, "auntie, be careful and don't let the money go. If she has n't got the money," says he, "they won't let her marry again. Money," says he, "is the mainspring [1] of everything." So be careful. This business, my son, has reached a crisis.

NIKITA. What difference does that make to me? Let her look after her own money.

MATRIONA. What nonsense you talk, my son! How can a woman think of such things? You know what a woman is, and you are a man. Of course you can hide it, and all that sort of thing. You have more sense if anything happens.

NIKITA. Ekh! women's brains are no good at all!

MATRIONA. No good at all! You rake in the money! The woman will be in your power. If she should begin to snore a little or anything you can turn on the screws.

NIKITA. Confound you all! I 'll go.

SCENE XIX

NIKITA, MATRIONA, *and* ANISYA

ANISYA (*runs out from the izba and joins* MATRIONA *behind the corner; she looks pale.*) It was on him. Here it is. (*Indicates something under her apron.*)

MATRIONA. Give it to Mikita; he 'll hide it. Mikita, take and hide it somewhere.

NIKITA. All right, give it to me!

[1] *Golova*, head.

ANISYA. Okh, my head! I'll attend to it myself. (*Starts for the gates.*)

MATRIONA (*seizes her by the arm*). Where are you going? They'll catch you; here's his sister coming; give it to him! he knows; what a stupid!

ANISYA (*stops irresolutely*). Oh, my head!

NIKITA. Say, give it to me; I'll stow it away.

ANISYA. Where will you stow it?

NIKITA. Have n't you any courage? (*Laughs.*)

SCENE XX

The Same, and AKULINA (*who comes with the wash*)

ANISYA. O-okh, my poor head! (*Hands over the money.*) Mikita, look out!

NIKITA. What are you afraid of? I'll hide it where I can't find it myself. (*Exit.*)

SCENE XXI

MATRIONA, ANISYA, *and* AKULINA

ANISYA (*stands in a state of terror*). O-okh! suppose he —

MATRIONA. Say, is he dead?

ANISYA. Yes, I think so. I took it from him and he did not stir.

MATRIONA. Go into the izba! Here comes Akulina!

ANISYA. There, now; I have committed the sin, and he's got the money.

MATRIONA. Hush up! Go into the izba! Here comes Marfa!

ANISYA. Well, I have trusted it to him. I must run the risk! (*Exit.*)

SCENE XXII

MARFA, AKULINA, MATRIONA

MARFA (*enters from one side*, AKULINA *from the other. To* AKULINA). I should have come sooner, but I was at

my daughter's. Well, how is the old man? Is he like to die?

AKULINA (*puts down the washing*). Who knows? I have been down at the river.

MARFA (*pointing to* MATRIONA). What is that woman?

MATRIONA. I 'm from Zuevo. I 'm Nikita's mother, and I 'm from Zuevo, my dear. How do you do? Your brother, poor heart, is very sick. He came out a little while ago. Send for my dear sister, says he..... Oh, can it be that he is dead?

SCENE XXIII

The Same, and ANISYA

ANISYA (*comes out from the izba with a shriek, clutches the post and begins to howl*). O-okh! O-o-o-o! to wh-o-o-om have you left me — O-o-o-o miserable widow — O-o-o! for long, long years! why did you close your bright eyes! —

SCENE XXIV

The Same, and the NEIGHBORING WOMAN

(*The* WOMAN *and* MATRIONA *support her under the arms.* AKULINA *and* MARFA *enter the izba. Enter* POPULACE.)

A VOICE FROM AMONG THE POPULACE. Send for the old women; let them get him ready for the funeral.

MATRIONA (*tucks up her sleeves*). Is there any water in the kettle? If not, there is some still in the samovar. I think I will take hold too.

CURTAIN

ACT III

PERSONAGES OF ACT III

AKIM.	ANYUTKA.
NIKITA.	MITRITCH: An old laborer, formerly a soldier.
AKULINA.	
ANISYA.	ANISYA'S GODMOTHER.

SCENE I

PIOTR'S *izba. Winter. Nine months have passed since Act II.* ANISYA, *in slovenly attire, sits at the loom, weaving.* ANYUTKA *on the oven*

MITRITCH (*the old laborer, enters slowly, takes off his things*). O Lord, have mercy! Has n't the master come in yet?

ANISYA. What?

MITRITCH. Has 'nt Nikita come from town yet?

ANISYA. No, not yet.

MITRITCH. Probably carousing, O Lord!

ANISYA. Did you put things in order in the barn?

MITRITCH. Of course I did. I put everything away in order, and covered everything with straw. I don't like slipshod ways. O Lord! Mikola the Merciful! (*He picks his corns.*) Anyway, it should be time for him to come.

ANISYA. Why should he be in a hurry? He has money. He 's having a good time with the girl, I suppose ....

MITRITCH. If he has plenty of money, why should n't he have a good time? But why did Akulina go to town?

ANISYA. Just ask her why the devil she went.

MITRITCH. It 's plain enough if she went to town. In town there are many things to be got for money! O Lord!

ANYUTKA. O matushka, I heard it myself: Says he,

"I 'll buy you a pretty shawl.[1] As true as I live I will," says he; "you shall choose it yourself," and she dressed herself up just fine! she put on her sleeveless jacket and her French kerchief.

ANISYA. Her girlish modesty seems to last as long as to the threshold, but when she gets out, she forgets all about it. The impudent wretch!

MITRITCH. Away with you! What is there to be modest about? When there's money, then have a good time! O Lord! Won't dinner be ready soon? (ANISYA *keeps silent.*) At any rate, I 'll warm myself a little. (*Climbs up on the oven.*) O Lord, O Holy Virgin, Mother of God! O Saint Mikola!

SCENE II

The Same, and the KUMA

KUMA (*enters*). Has n't your man come in yet?

ANISYA. No.

KUMA. It would seem to be time for him. May he not have stopped at our inn? Sister Fekla was saying, matushka, that lots of sledges from town were standing there.

ANISYA. Say, Anyutka!

ANYUTKA. What is it?

ANISYA. Run to the inn, Anyutka, and look. Perhaps he 's come as far as there, and is drinking there.

ANYUTKA (*springs down from the oven, puts on her things*). I 'll go.

KUMA. And did he take Akulina with him?

ANISYA. There would not have been any reason for him to go, otherwise. Everything he does is because of her. He had to deposit some money in the bank, he said; but she sets him up to everything.

KUMA (*shakes her head*). You don't say! (*Silence.*)

ANYUTKA (*in the door*). And if he 's there, what shall I say?

[1] *Polushalchik*, diminutive of *polushal*, half shawl.

ANISYA. Only just see if he 's there.
ANYUTKA. All right, I 'll fly over in a jiffy. (*Exit.*)

SCENE III

ANISYA, MITRITCH, *and* KUMA

(*Long silence*)

MITRITCH (*roars*). O Lord, merciful Mikola!
KUMA (*shudders*). O, how that scared me! what is it?
ANISYA. It 's Mitritch, the workman.
KUMA. O-o-kh! It made me tremble! I had forgotten. But they say, neighbor, that you 're going to marry Akulin off: is that so?
ANISYA (*comes out from behind the loom and sits down at the table*). There was an offer came from Dyedlovo, but you see some gossip must have reached 'em; for after they sent to us, there was nothing more said. So it has fallen through. Who would want her?
KUMA. How about the Lizunofs from Zuevo?
ANISYA. There was some proposition of the sort. But that fell through — he would n't take her either.
KUMA. Well, you ought to marry her off.
ANISYA. That is so. But I don't know how to get her out of the house, neighbor; I can't manage it. He does n't want it; nor does she either. You see he has n't got tired yet of traipsing round with her.
KUMA. E-e-e! what a sin! Who 'd ever thought it! Why he 's her stepfather!
ANISYA. Oh! neighbor! they deceived me, they threw dust in my eyes so cleverly, I can't begin to tell you! I was such a fool, I never noticed anything, I never dreamed of such a thing when I married him — not the least wee bit of a suspicion[1] but I have no doubt they 'd already begun to be intimate!
KUMA. O-o what actions!
ANISYA. As time went on, I saw they were beginning

[1] *Nitchevokhon'ko*, diminutive of *Nitchevo*, nothing.

to hide something from me. Ah! neighbor, how bad I felt! What a wretched life I have been leading! I 'd better never have loved him.

KUMA. You don't say!

ANISYA. And think how it hurts me to endure such an insult from him! Oh! it hurts!

KUMA. How is it? They say he 's begun to treat you cruelly.

ANISYA. It 's all true — it used to be he was peaceable when he was drunk. And it is a fact he got drunk very often and I was good to him. But nowadays when he is set up, he comes down on me so, it seems as if he would trample me under his feet. A day or two ago he grabbed my hair, and I thought he would pull it out by the roots. And then the girl is worse than a snake! I did n't know the earth brought forth such vipers.

KUMA. O-o-o! You are in tribulation! I 'm amazed at you! How much you have to endure! You took him in when he was down, and now he treats you so shabbily. Why don't you make a protest against it?

ANISYA. Oh, my dear neighbor,[1] what can I do with my heart? My late husband was rather stern, but I twisted him as I pleased; I can't do so here, neighbor. As soon as I set eyes on him, my whole heart melts within me. I have no courage against him. I 'm just like a wet chicken when I 'm with him.

KUMA. O-o! neighbor! Evidently something has bewitched you! They say Matriona meddles with such matters. It must be she did it.

ANISYA. Yes, I 've thought the same thing, neighbor. You see this is the second time I 've been harmed. It seems as if I could tear him to pieces! But when I see him, it 's no use; I can't feel angry with him.

KUMA. It 's evident you 're under a spell. It does n't take long to ruin a person. As soon as I look at you I see something has happened to you.

ANISYA. My legs have shrunk as thin as young lin-

[1] *Okh, kumushka milaya; kumushka*, diminutive of *kuma*, gossip.

dens. But you should look at that fool, Akulina. She used to be a disorderly, slatternly girl, but now look at her! What made the change? And just see what things he gives her! She wears fine things and swells up like a bubble on water. She may be a fool, but she 's got an idea into her head: "I 'm mistress here," says she. "It 's my house, and batyushka wanted me to marry him. She 's ugly, too, God forgive her. She 's got such a temper that she 'd pull the thatch from the roof!

KUMA. O-okh! I see what a life you lead. And yet folks envy you. They say you 're rich, but I know that tears often run over gold.

ANISYA. Good reason for envy! Yes, and all our money is going like the dew! It 's awful the way he squanders it.

KUMA. But why do you let him have it? It 's your money!

ANISYA. If you only knew all about it! But then I made one great mistake.

KUMA. If I were in your place, neighbor, I should go straight to the nachalnik, — to the chief officer. The money 's yours. How can he waste it. He has no right to!

ANISYA. They don't regard such things nowadays.

KUMA. Oh, neighbor, I 'm sorry for you. You have grown weak.

ANISYA. I have grown weak, my dear, very weak. He has used me all up. And I know nothing at all. O-oh my poor head!

KUMA. Who can that be coming!

(*She listens. The door opens and* AKIM *enters.*)

SCENE IV

The Same, and AKIM

AKIM (*crosses himself, shakes off his bark shoes, and takes off his sheepskin coat*). Peace to this house! Are you well? Your health, auntie!

ANISYA. Your health, batyushka! Just from home?

AKIM. I thought, don't you know, you see, I 'd come, you know, and see my son. I 'd come to my son. I started rather late; after I 'd eaten dinner, I started, don't you know; but you see the snow is rather heavy; heavy going, don't you see? So I 'm late, you know. Is my son at home? is he at home?

ANISYA. No, he went to town.

AKIM (*sits on the bench*). I had a little business, you see, that is, just a little business with him. I told him, you see, a few days ago, yes, I told him about what I wanted; how my poor horse died, don't you know; died, my poor horse. And, you see, I must get one somehow; get a horse, don't you see, yes, some kind of a horse. And so, you see, I've come, you know.

ANISYA. Mikita told me. When he comes, you can talk it over. (*Goes to the oven.*) Have some supper: he'll be here soon. Mitritch, say, Mitritch come to supper!

MITRITCH. O Lord, Saint Nicholas the merciful!

ANISYA. Come to supper.

KUMA. I must be going, good-by!

SCENE V

AKIM, ANISYA, *and* MITRITCH

MITRITCH (*climbs down from the oven*). I did n't know when I went to sleep. O Lord! O Saint Mikola!.... How are you, Uncle Akim!

AKIM. Eh! Mitritch! So it 's you, is it? Oh, yes, you know[1]....

MITRITCH. Yes, I live here as your son Nikita's man.

AKIM. You don't say! Oh, yes, of course, as my son's man! You don't say!

MITRITCH. I was living in town at a merchant's, but

[1] Akim's limited vocabulary fills in the gaps of fluency with his frequently repeated *znatchit, tayo.*

I took to drinking there. And so I came to the country. As I had no other place to go, I hired out here. (*Yawns.*) O Lord!

AKIM. But tell me, you don't say, Mikishka — why, what 's he doing? You don't mean to say that he has so much to do that he needs to hire, that is to say, has to hire a man?

ANISYA. What has he to do? He was getting along all right; but now something 's wrong in his mind, and so he hired a man.

MITRITCH. He has money enough, so what difference does it make to him?

AKIM. But don't you know it 's wrong; I tell you, it 's wrong. It 's all wrong. It 's wasteful, don't you know!

ANISYA. Yes, it 's wasteful, very wasteful. It 's a shame!

AKIM. That 's the way, don't you know; a man tries to better himself, and, you see, he comes out badly. Riches spoil a man, yes, spoil a man.

MITRITCH. A dog goes mad from too much fat and a man is apt to go mad from fat living. See how I got spoiled with too fat living! For three weeks I was drunk all the time. I drank up my last pair of drawers. When I had nothing left, I gave it up. Now, I 've sworn off. Good-by to it.[1]

AKIM. But where is she, you know, your old woman?....

MITRITCH. My old woman 's found her right place. She 's in town; stopping round at drinking-places. She 's a beauty! One eye torn out, the other bunged up, and her snout knocked round to one side. She 's a shy one, but she manages to get her mouth full of barley pirogs.

AKIM. O-o! What do you mean?

MITRITCH. Where else is the place for a soldier's wife? She 's attending to her own business. (*Silence.*)

AKIM (*to* ANISYA). What took Nikita to town; say,

[1] *Nu yeyo;* literally, now her.

did he carry a load? He had something to sell, did he, and took it, did he?

ANISYA (*lays the table and serves the food*). He went without any load. He went after money.... to take it out of bank.

AKIM (*sits down to supper*). What do you want to do with it — with the money, I mean, yes, the money?

ANISYA. No, we don't take much of it. Only twenty or thirty rubles; we spent some, so we had to draw some out.

AKIM. Had to draw some out? Why do you take it — that is, take money, don't you know? To-day, don't you know, you take some; to-morrow, don't you know, you take some — and so you use it all up, don't you know!

ANISYA. This is extra. The money is n't touched at all.

AKIM. Is n't touched? How do you mean "is n't touched"? You take it out, and still it is n't touched? Now suppose you put flour, don't you know, yes, flour, in a closet or, don't you know, in a pantry, and then you keep taking out from it, don't you know, will it be untouched? Of course it won't be; it 's all a mistake, don't you know? You just try it; it 's all a mistake, don't you know? How can it be untouched? You mean to say you draw it out and still it 's there?

ANISYA. Well, I don't know anything about it. Ivan Moseïtch advised us about it. "Put the money in the bank," says he, "and the money 'll be safe, and you 'll get a percentage on it."

MITRITCH (*has finished eating*). That 's so. I lived at a merchant's. They did that way. Deposit your money and lie on the oven, and it keeps coming in.

AKIM. What you say is wonderful, don't you know! How is it? You get it, you see, you get it — that is the money, don't you know, but who is it you get it of — the money, I mean.

ANISYA. They give it to you at the bank.

MITRITCH. What are you talking about? You 're a woman, you can't explain it. Now, look here, I 'll just

make it all plain for you. Just pay attention. Suppose, for example, you have some money, and suppose spring has come and the ground is ready for sowing, or you have taxes to pay. Now, suppose I come to you. "Akim," I say, "let me have a red bill, and when I 've harvested my field, next Intercession, I 'll give you back your ten rubles, and I 'll harvest your field in return for the favor." And then suppose, for example, you see I have something to draw with: a little horse or a little cow, and you say, "Give me two or three rubles for the favor, that 's all." I 'm in a bad fix, and I can't get out of it. "All right," I say, "I will take the ten rubles." In the autumn I make the exchange, I carry it back to him, and you get three rubles out of me to boot.

Akim. But, you see, don't you know, only crooked men do that way; of course, don't you know, if any one forgets God, why then, of course, don't you know, they might do that way.

Mitritch. You just wait! Now, you remember, of course, how you did, — how you plundered me, — and suppose Anisya has some money laid up, for example. She does n't know what to do with it. Of course it is n't a woman's business, and so she has nowhere to put it. And she comes to you and asks you if you can't make some use of her money for her. "Why, of course I can," you say, if she 'll only wait. Well then, the next summer, I come again: "Let me have another little red note, and I 'll return it with due respect."... Well, you think it over. If my skin has n't been turned once too often, if I am still able to be plucked, then you give me Anisya's money. But if, for example, I have nothing left, and nothing to eat, then of course you know there 's nothing to be got out of me, and you say, "Pack yourself off, brother, and God be with you," and you try to find some one else, and you give your money and Anisya's, and so you pluck that one. That 's what a bank does. It keeps going round in a circle. It is a clever trick, brother.

Akim (*growing indignant*). What is that you say? Of course, that 's downright rascality, don't you know!

Why! Muzhiks who do that sort of thing, don't you know, consider it a sin, don't you know! Why! It is contrary to the law, don't you know, contrary to the law. It 's downright rascality. But how educated folks, don't you know, can....

MITRITCH. Why, brother, that 's what they like to do better than anything else. Just mark my word, any one who 's rather stupid, or a woman, for instance, who can't use their money in business, why, they take it to bank, and, as it were, barley pirogs fall into their mouths all cooked with that money; but it cheats the people. It 's a clever trick.

AKIM (*sighing*). Ekh! I see how it is! Why, don't you know, when you have n't any money, it 's woe and tribulation; but when you have, it 's twice as bad, don't you know? Anyhow, God commanded us to work. But, don't you see, you put your money in the bank and go to sleep, and expect it to feed you, don't you know. Why! it 's rascally business, don't you know, and contrary to the law!

MITRITCH. Contrary to law? Folks don't mind that these days! They cheat you out of your eye-teeth. But that 's all business.

AKIM (*sighs*). Well, well, what times we 've come to! There I saw the water-closets, don't you know, the kind they have in town. Polished, polished, don't you know! made like a tavern. But what 's the use of it? It 's no use! Okh! they 've forgotten God. Why, of course they have. Yes, we 've forgotten God, forgotten him! Thanks, daughter, had enough, I 'm all full! (*Comes round from behind the table.* MITRITCH *climbs up on the oven.*)

ANISYA (*clears away the dishes, and eats*). I wonder if his father would warn him, but it 's a shameful thing to speak.

AKIM. What?

ANISYA. No matter, I was talking to myself.

Scene VI

The Same, and Anyutka

(Anyutka *enters*)

Akim. Ah, clever girl! you 're always busy! You 're frozen, are n't you?

Anyutka. Oh, I 'm awful cold! How are you, grandpa?

Anisya. Tell me, was he there?

Anyutka. No! but Andryan was just over from town, and said he saw them in town, at a tavern. "Your pa," says he, "was drunk; very drunk."

Anisya. Do you want something to eat? Here 's something for you.

Anyutka (*goes to the stove*). Oh, I 'm cold. My hands are just stiff. (Akim *undoes his leg-wrappers;* Anisya *washes the dishes.*)

Anisya. Batyushka.

Akim. What do you say?

Anisya. Is it true Marishka is well settled?

Akim. Pretty well. She 's getting along. Why you see, she 's a sensible, quiet woman, you know; she tries hard. Of course she 's a good woman, and she 's painstaking, you know, and she 's not topping; she 's a woman as is a woman.[1]

Anisya. Well, they say some one from your village — a relation of Marinka's husband — wants to marry our Akulina. Tell me, have you heard anything about it?

Akim. Can it be the Mironofs. The women have been gossiping about it. Of course, I 've not paid any attention to it. I don't know anything at all about it, you see. The old women have talked about it more or

[1] *Zabotchka, znatchit, nitchavo znatchit;* literally, little woman (it also means butterfly), of course, nothing, of course. *Nitchavo* is for *nitchevo*, genitive of *nitchto*, nothing; a word of extraordinary significance in a Russian mouth. Any translation of Akim's disconnected repetitions must necessarily be largely guesswork. — Ed.

less. But you see I don't remember, I don't remember. But the Mironofs are good peasants, well-to-do, you know.

ANISYA. Well, I don't know; but the sooner she gets married off the better.

AKIM. Why so?

ANYUTKA (*listens*). Here they come.

ANISYA. Well, don't mind them! (*Continues to wash the spoons without turning her head.*)

SCENE VII

The Same, and NIKITA

NIKITA. Anisya, wife — who 's come? (ANISYA *glances at him and turns away without answering.*) Who 's come, I say. Have you lost your tongue? (*Angrily.*)

ANISYA. Trying to swell, is he? Come in.

NIKITA (*still more threateningly*). Who has come?

ANISYA (*approaches and takes him by the arm*). Well, my husband has come. Go into the izba.

NIKITA (*resists*). All right! It 's your husband, but how do you receive your husband? Speak properly!

ANISYA. Deuce take you! Mikita!

NIKITA. So far so good! Clumsy! Why don't you add my father's name?

ANISYA. Akimuitch! There!

NIKITA (*still in the doorway*). So far so good! Now tell my family name!

ANISYA (*laughs and pulls him by the arm*). Chilikin! There!

NIKITA. That 's all right! He 's drunk! (*Clutches by the door-post.*) No! tell me which leg Chilikin puts out first when he goes into the izba.

ANISYA. Now, stop your nonsense; you let the cold in.

NIKITA. Speak, which leg first? You 've got to tell me!

ANISYA (*to herself*). He 's a nuisance now. Well, the left leg. Now come in, will you!

NIKITA. All right.

ANISYA. You look and see who 's inside.

NIKITA. My father! Well, I 'm not afraid of my father. I can pay him my respects. How 's your health, father?[1] (*Bows before him and gives him his hand.*) Our respects to you!

AKIM (*not replying to him*). Liquor, oh, liquor; what harm it does! It 's scandalous!

NIKITA. Liquor? What have I drunk? That 's just the trouble! I drank with a friend — drank to his health.

ANISYA. Go in and lie down, will you?

NIKITA. Wife, tell me where am I, anyway?

ANISYA. It 's all right, go in and lie down.

NIKITA. Wait till I have the samovar and have a drink with my father. Start the samovar. Akulina, come in!

SCENE VIII

The Same, and AKULINA

AKULINA (*in gala dress, enters with her purchases; to* NIKITA). What made you mix everything up? Where 's my yarn?

NIKITA. Yarn? Your yarn 's there. Hey! Mitritch! Where are you? Are you asleep? Go and put up the horse!

AKIM (*does not see* AKULINA, *but looks at his son*). What is he doing? The old man is dead tired, don't you know, he 's been threshing; but *he* is drunk. "Put up the horse," indeed. Tfu! rascality!

MITRITCH (*climbs down from the oven and puts on his felt boots*). O merciful Lord! Is the horse in the yard? Dead tired, I 've no doubt! Ish! The devil take him! How full he is! Chock full! O Lord! Saint Mikola! (*Puts on his shuba, and goes to the yard.*)

NIKITA (*sits down*). Forgive me, father. I 'm drunk, that 's a fact; but what 's to be done about it? Even a

[1] *Batyushka.*

hen will drink! Won't she? But forgive me. As for Mitritch, he won't care; he 'll put up the horse.

ANISYA. Truly; shall I start the samovar?

NIKITA. Yes; father 's come, and I want to talk with him, and drink a little tea. (*To* AKULINA.) Have you brought in all the purchases?

AKULINA. The purchases? I brought in mine, but the other things are in the sledge. Oh, here 's something which don't belong to me. (*Throws a bundle on the table and stores away her own things in a trunk.* ANYUTKA *watches* AKULINA *putting her things away;* AKIM *does not look at his son, but arranges his leg-wrappers and bark shoes on the oven.*)

ANISYA (*goes out with the samovar*). There, her trunk is full — and yet he has bought more!

SCENE IX

AKIM, AKULINA, ANYUTKA, *and* NIKITA

NIKITA (*assumes a sober air*). Now, father, don't be vext! Do you think I'm drunk? Really, I can attend to anything; tho' I drink, I don't lose my wits. I can talk with you any time, father. I remember everything: you sent a message about money; your little horse died — I remember. That 's all right. That 's in our power. If you needed a large sum of money, then we might have to postpone it a little; but this I can do for you. Here it is.

AKIM (*continues to occupy himself with his foot-gear*). Ah! my poor, a spring road, don't you know, it's no highway....

NIKITA. What do you mean by that? Talk with a drunken man is no conversation. But don't you worry. Let us have a little tea. I'm all right; really I can attend to everything.

AKIM (*shakes his head*). Eh! Ekh-khe-khe!

NIKITA. Money — here's some. (*Feels in his kaftan, takes out his pocket-book, unrolls some bills, selects a ten-*

ruble note.) Take it for the horse. Take it for the horse. I can't forget my father. Really, I won't go back on you — because you're my father. Here, take it. It's very simple, I don't grudge it. (*Goes to* AKIM *and offers him the money, but* AKIM *refuses to take it.* NIKITA *thrusts it into his hand.*) Take it! I give it ungrudgingly.

AKIM. Why, I can't take it, don't you know, and I can't talk with you, don't you know, because, don't you see, you're not in a fit condition ....

NIKITA. I won't take "No." Take it! (*Thrusts the money into* AKIM'S *hand.*)

SCENE X

The Same, and ANISYA

ANISYA (*enters and pauses*). Yes, you'd better take it. You see he won't give it.

AKIM (*takes it, shaking his head*). Ekh! Liquor! A man's not a man, don't you know ....

NIKITA. There, that's the better way. You can return or not, just as you please. God be with you! That's the way I'm made. (*Sees* AKULINA.) Akulina, show your presents.

AKULINA. What?

NIKITA. Show your presents.

AKULINA. My presents? Why should I show them? I have already put them away.

NIKITA. Get them out, I tell you; Anyutka will like to see them. Show them to Anyutka, I say. Undo the shawl. Give it here!

AKIM. O-okh! it's a wretched sight. (*Climbs up on the oven.*)

AKULINA (*takes out her things and lays them on the table*). There, now; what do they want to look at them for?

ANYUTKA. Oh, that's pretty! It's as nice as Stepanida's!

AKULINA. Stepanida's? Stepanida's does not compare with it! (*Becoming animated and spreading out the shawl.*) Just look here! That cost something — it 's French.

ANYUTKA. And that chintz is just fine! Mashutka has some like it, only hers is brighter on a light blue background. This is awfully pretty.

NIKITA. That 's so! (ANISYA *goes angrily to the closet and returns with the pipe and stand, and approaches the table.*)

ANISYA. There you are, spreading out all that stuff!

NIKITA. Just come and look at it!

ANISYA. Why should I look at it? Have n't I seen things? Put them away! (*Pushes the shawl on the floor.*)

AKULINA. What are you knocking my things about for? Knock your own things. (*Picks them up.*)

NIKITA. Anisya! Look!

ANISYA. Why should I look?

NIKITA. Do you think I forgot you? Look here! (*Shows a bundle and sits on it.*) It 's a present for you. Only deserve it! Wife, what am I sitting on?

ANISYA. You can swell round if you want to. I 'm not afraid of you. But I should like to know whose money you are squandering? buying presents for your fatty!

AKULINA. Your money? How 's that? You tried to steal it, but you did n't succeed. Go away! (*Tries to pass, and pushes* ANISYA.)

ANISYA. What are you pushing me for? I 'll slap you.

AKULINA. Slap me? All right, strike! (*Approaches her.*)

NIKITA. There, women, women! Hush! (*Stands between them.*)

AKULINA. She has to meddle. You had better hold your tongue. Perhaps you think folks don't know.

ANISYA. What do folks know? Speak, speak! What do folks know?

AKULINA. I know a fine work of yours!

ANISYA. You slut! You live with another woman's husband!

AKULINA. Well, you poisoned yours.

ANISYA (*flings herself on* AKULINA). You lie!

NIKITA (*holds her*). Anisya! Do you forget?

ANISYA. You threaten me, do you? I 'm not afraid of you!

NIKITA. Out of here! (*Turns* ANISYA *round and pushes her out.*)

ANISYA. Where should I go? I won't go out of my own house!

NIKITA. Out of here, I say! Don't you dare come in!

ANISYA. I won't go! (NIKITA *pushes her*, ANISYA *weeps and shrieks, clinging to the door.*) Why should I be pushed out of my own house? What are you doing, you villain? Do you think there 's no justice for you? Just you wait!

NIKITA. There! there!

ANISYA. I 'll go to the elder, to the policeman.[1]

NIKITA. Away, I tell you! (*Keeps pushing her.*)

ANISYA (*outside the door*). I will hang myself.

SCENE XI

NIKITA, AKULINA, ANYUTKA, *and* AKIM

NIKITA. Never mind!

ANYUTKA. O-o-o! my dear mother, my own mother!

NIKITA. There now, I only scared her! What are you crying for? She 'll come back, never you fear! Go, look after the samovar. (*Exit* ANYUTKA.)

SCENE XII

NIKITA, AKIM, *and* AKULINA

AKULINA (*collects her purchases and puts them away*). Look at that, the wretch, how she messed it! Just you wait; I 'll tear her cloak[2] for her. Truly, I will!

[1] *Uryadnik*, village policeman.

[2] *Bezrukavka*, from *bez*, without, and *rukaf*, a sleeve: a sleeveless garment.

NIKITA. I 've turned her out; what more do you want?

AKULINA. She soiled my new shawl? Indeed, if the bitch had not gone out, I 'd have torn her eyes out!

NIKITA. Don't be resentful. Why should you be resentful? As if I loved her!

AKULINA. Loved her! Is that thick-mouth any one to love? If you 'd only turned her off *then*, there would n't have been any trouble. You ought to have sent her to the devil! But the house is mine, all the same, and the money, too. "I am the mistress," says she. Mistress![1] What kind of a wife[1] was she to her husband! She is a murderess, that 's what she is. She 'll do the same to you.

NIKITA. Okh! You can't stop a woman's tongue! You don't know what you are talking about!

AKULINA. Yes, I do know, too! I will not live with her. I 'll drive her out of the house. She and I can't stay under one roof. I am the mistress of this place. She is n't the mistress — she 's a jail-bird!

NIKITA. There now, shut up! What can you do with her? Don't look at her. I 'm the master here. I will do what I please. I don't love her any more and I do love you. I 'll love any one I please. That 's my right. I have had enough of her. *There 's* where she is! (*Points to the ground.*) Ekh! No harmonica here!

The cakes are on the stove,
The kasha on the stair,
And we will try to live
And have an easy time,
But death will surely come,
And we shall be at peace.
The cakes are on the stove,
The kasha on the stair.

[1] *Khozyaïka* in both cases.

Scene XIII

The Same, and Mitritch

Mitritch (*enters, takes off his coat, and climbs on the stove*). So it seems the women have been quarreling again; fighting! O Lord! Blessed Mikola!

Akim (*sits on the edge of the stove, gets his leg-wrappers and bark shoes, and begins to put them on*). Get in, get into the corner there.

Mitritch (*creeps up*). Evidently they have n't got things settled yet. O Lord!

Nikita. Get out the liquor; we 'll have some with the tea.

Scene XIV

The Same, and Anyutka

Anyutka (*enters: to* Akulina). Sister,[1] the samovar is all ready to come in.

Nikita. Where is your mother?

Anyutka. She is in the entry, crying.

Nikita. All right, call her in; tell her to bring the samovar. And, Akulina, you put on the glasses.

Akulina. The glasses? Very well! (*She gets the glasses.*)

Nikita (*gets out the liquor, biscuits, and herring*). This, of course, is for myself; the yarn for the woman; the kerosene is out there in the entry. And here 's the money. Wait! (*Takes the abacus.*) I shall soon find out. (*Reckons.*) Wheat flour, eighty kopeks; oil .... ten rubles to father. Father, come and drink some tea! (*Silence.* Akim *sits on the stove and winds his leg-wrappers around him.*)

[1] Nyanka, diminutive of *nyanya*, nurse.

Scene XV

The Same, and Anisya

Anisya (*bringing in the samovar*). Where shall I put it?

Nikita. Put it on the table. Tell me, did you go to the Starosta? It 's all right! Speak, and bite it off! Now stop being mad! Sit down and have a drink. (*Pours her out a glass of liquor.*) Here 's a little present for you. (*Hands her the package on which he had been sitting.* Anisya *takes it silently, shaking her head.*)

Akim (*gets down and puts on his shuba. He approaches the table and lays the bank note on it*). No, here 's your money. Take it.

Nikita (*does not see the money*). Where are you hurrying off to?

Akim. Well, I am going, yes, I am going, don't you know; forgive me, for Christ's sake. (*Takes his cap and wallet.*)

Nikita. What a pity! Where are you going at night?

Akim. I can't stay, don't you know; no, I can't stay, that is, in your house, I can't stay. Forgive me.

Nikita. But where are you going when tea is on?

Akim (*buckles his belt*). I am going, don't you see, because, you know, it 's all wrong; yes, all wrong, Mikishka, at your house, all wrong, you know. You see, you are living a wicked life, Mikishka, a wicked life. So I 'm going.

Nikita. There, now, stop your nonsense; sit down and drink some tea.

Anisya. What do you mean, babyushka? Why, it 'll shame us before folks. What have you taken offense at?

Akim. No offense at all, don't you know, no offense. Of course not; only I see my son is going to ruin, yes, to ruin, don't you know; my son going to ruin; my son, to ruin.

NIKITA. Ruin? What ruin? Just tell us.

AKIM. Ruin, yes, to ruin; you are absolutely going to ruin. What did I tell you last summer?

NIKITA. Yes, you told a little something.

AKIM. I told you, you know, about the orphan girl that you had wronged, the orphan girl. I mean you had wronged Marina.

NIKITA. Ek! You 've a great memory for old, stale tattle; the thing is past.

AKIM (*growing hot*). Past? Nay, brother, 't is not past. One sin, don't you know, hooks on to another, and brings a whole train of them; and you have entangled yourself in sin, Mikishka. I see how it is; you 're entangled in sin, don't you know. Entangled, sunk in deep, don't you know!

NIKITA. Sit down and have some tea, and we 'll talk it all over.

AKIM. I can't drink your tea, don't you know. For I feel terrible sad, don't you know, terrible sad over your wicked ways, and so you see, I can't, no, I can't possibly drink your tea.

NIKITA. What a fuss you make! Come to the table!

AKIM. Your riches are like a net, don't you know, a net to you. Ah, Mikishka! your soul is in need!

NIKITA. What right have you to come to my house and reproach me? And why do you insist so on it? I am a child to let you pull my hair. All that sort of thing is done away with nowadays.

AKIM. That 's so. I have heard that nowadays they pull the fathers' beards, you know; but you see it leads to ruin, yes, it leads to ruin.

NIKITA (*angrily*). We live; we ask no favors of you, and here you come to us with your wants.

AKIM. Money? There is your money. I will sooner beg, don't you know; but I would n't take this, of course I would n't.

NIKITA. Now hush up! And what are you vexed about? What are you spoiling our party for? (*Holds him by the arm.*)

AKIM (*screams*). Let me go! I won't stay, I 'd rather sleep under the fence than in your vile company. Tfu! God forgive you! (*Exit.*)

SCENE XVI

NIKITA, AKULINA, ANISYA, *and* MITRITCH

NIKITA. It 's too bad of you!

SCENE XVII

The Same, and AKIM

AKIM (*opens the door*). Come to yourself, Nikita. Your soul is in danger! (*Exit.*)

SCENE XVIII

NIKITA, AKULINA, ANISYA, *and* MITRITCH.

AKULINA (*brings the cups*). Tell me, shall I pour? (*All are silent.*)

MITRITCH (*bellows*). O Lord, have mercy on me a sinner! (*All shudder.*)

NIKITA (*lies down on the bench*). Oh, how annoying, how annoying! Akulina, where is the harmonica?

AKULINA. The harmonica? Don't you remember? You carried it to be mended. I have poured the tea; drink it.

NIKITA. I don't want any. Put out the light. .... Oh, how annoying! how annoying for me! (*Weeps.*)

CURTAIN

ACT IV

PERSONAGES OF ACT IV

NIKITA.	MATRIONA.
MITRITCH.	ANISYA.
NEIGHBOR.	ANYUTKA.
KUMA.	MATCHMAKER: A morose muzhik.

Autumn. Evening. The moon shines. Interior of the courtyard. In the middle of the stage, at the right, the winter izba and the gates; at the left, the summer izba and cellar. In the izba are heard loud talk and drunken shouts. The NEIGHBOR *comes forth from the entry, and beckons to* ANISYA'S *godmother — the* KUMA.

SCENE I

KUMA *and* NEIGHBOR

NEIGHBOR. Why has n't Akulina come?

KUMA. Why has n't she come? She'd be glad enough to come, but they say she can't. The matchmakers are here to inspect the bride, but, my dear mother,[1] she is lying in the summer room, and does n't show her face, my dear.

NEIGHBOR. What does that mean?

KUMA. Between us, they say she has the gripes!

NEIGHBOR. You don't say!

KUMA. Well, it 's this way. (*Whispers in her ear.*)

NEIGHBOR. Really? Well that 's a sin. Why, the matchmakers will find out about it.

KUMA. How will they find out? They 're all drunk. Besides, what they 're after chiefly is the dowry. It 's a good one: why, my dear mother, they give, with the girl, two shubas, six sarafans, a French shawl, a whole lot of linen, and in money, they say, two hundred rubles.

[1] *Matushka moya*, little mother mine. The speakers are two women introduced as *sosyedka*, neighbor, and *kuma*, gossip or godmother, as in Acts II and III. — ED.

NEIGHBOR. Well, even that money won't make them glad. What a disgrace!

KUMA. Sh! Here's the matchmaker![1] (*They stop talking and go into the entry.*)

SCENE II

MATCHMAKER (*comes out alone from the entry; hiccoughs*). I'm all of a sweat. It was horribly hot! I must get cooled off a little. (*Stands, and draws a long breath.*) And God knows how it is. .... There's something about this does n't please me. .... Well, it 's as the old woman ....

SCENE III

MATCHMAKER *and* MATRIONA

MATRIONA (*comes out from the same entry*). Here, I am looking: where's the matchmaker? Where 's the matchmaker? Ah, here you are, friend; I've been looking for you. .... Well, good father, glory be to God, everything has gone off honorably. It is not the time to boast. Besides, I was taught never to boast. But in this case you've made a good bargain, and God grant you may be everlastingly grateful to me. And the bride, I tell you, is a rarity. You would n't find such another girl in the whole district.

MATCHMAKER. It seems all right; but as regards the money, we must look out.

MATRIONA. Don't speak about the money. What she received from her parents is all safe. In these days a hundred and fifty rubles is no small sum.

MATCHMAKER. We don't find any fault, but we all want to do the best we can for our children.

MATRIONA. I will tell you one thing that 's true: if it

[1] *Svat.* The matchmaker arranges for the marriage settlement. In the present case the *svat* is the father of the prospective groom; he is accompanied by his *starukha*, or old woman. — ED.

had n't been for me, you never would have found such a one in your whole life. They came to them from the Kormilins, but I took your part. And as far as the money is concerned, I tell you honestly, when her late father died — his be the kingdom of heaven — he left orders that the widow should take Nikita into the house; and this I know because my son told me all about it; but the money went to Akulina. Any other man would have claimed it, but Nikita gave it all to her most honorably. It 's not an easy thing to get so much cash.

MATCHMAKER. People say more money than that was promised with her; your son is also pretty sharp.

MATRIONA. Oh, the white doves! In others' hands the slice is great. They give all they got. I tell you, don't you worry about the money. You 'd better have it securely settled. What a girl she is, good as ripe seed!

MATCHMAKER. That is so. But the wife and I suspect there may be something the matter with the girl; why does n't she appear? We think she may be sickly.

MATRIONA. I-i! She sickly? There 's no one around here so sound! The girl 's like cast steel! You can't pinch her. Why, you saw her the other day. She 's a terror at working. She 's a bit deaf, that 's a fact. But a worm-hole does n't spoil a red apple. But you see why she does n't come out: there 's a spell on her. And I know what bitch cast it. You see they knew about the betrothal and tried to stop it. But I know of a counter-spell. To-morrow the girl will be all right. Don 't you worry about the girl.

MATCHMAKER. Well, then, the matter is decided.

MATRIONA. All right, and don't you back out. And don't you forget me. I also have worked hard for this. Don't go back on me. ....

A WOMAN'S VOICE (*in the entry*). Come, Ivan, it 's time to go, is n't it?

MATCHMAKER. All right. (*Exit. There is a crowding into the entry and a sound of people departing.*)

Scene IV

Anisya *and* Anyutka

Anyutka (*runs out of the entry and beckons to* Anisya). Mamushka!

Anisya (*from the entry*). What is it?

Anyutka. Mamushka, come quick, or they 'll hear! (*Goes with her toward the shed.*)

Anisya. Tell me, what is it? Where is Akulina?

Anyutka. She went into the storehouse. And what she is doing there is awful! "As true as I live," she says, "I can't endure my sufferings. I shall scream at the top of my voice," she says. As true as I live!

Anisya. Perhaps she 'll wait a little. Let us get rid of the guests.

Anyutka. Okh! Mamushka! How hard it is for her! And she scolds, too! "It 's no use their drinking my health!" says she, "I shan't marry," says she, "I shall die," says she. Oh mamushka! Supposing she should die! It 's awful! I 'm afraid!

Anisya. Never fear, she won't die! but don't you go to her. Go away! (*Exeunt* Anisya *and* Anyutka.)

Scene V

Mitritch (*alone. Approaches from the gates and carefully picks up the scattered hay*). O Lord! Mikola the merciful! How they did blow in the liquor! And how they smelt of it! The whole yard stinks! No, I don't like it, can't abide it! And see how they scattered the hay. They did n't eat it, simply wasted it. Would you look at the bundle of it! What a smell! Right under one's nose! The deuce take it. (*Yawns.*) It 's bedtime! But I don't want to go in! How it fills my nose! What a cursed smell! (*Sounds of departure are heard.*) Well, they 've gone! O Lord, Mikola the merciful! They throw dust in each other's eyes. But it 's all nonsense!

Scene VI

Mitritch *and* Nikita

Nikita (*enters*). Mitritch! Go to your place on the stove; I will fasten up.

Mitritch. All right, give this to the sheep. So you 've seen them off, have you?

Nikita. Yes, but it 's not all right. I don't know what 'll come of it.

Mitritch. What rot! In such a case there 's the hospital. Whoever 's their father, they take 'em all. Give as much as you please; they ask no questions. Sometimes they even pay money; they like to get wet nurses. It 's very simple these days.

Nikita. Now be careful, Mitritch; if anything happens don't you chatter about it.

Mitritch. As far as I 'm concerned, cover your traces as best you can. Eka! how you smell of liquor! I 'll go indoors! (*Exit, yawning.*) O Lord!

Scene VII

Nikita (*stands silent a long time; then seats himself on a sledge*). Well, here 's trouble!

Scene VIII

Nikita *and* Anisya

Anisya (*enters*). Where are you?

Nikita. Here!

Anisya. What are you sitting here for? It 's no time to be dallying! *It* must be got rid of immediately.

Nikita. What are we going to do?

Anisya. I will tell you what. You do it.

Nikita. I suppose you 'd take it to the Foundling Hospital.

ANISYA. Take it and carry it wherever you please. You're very clever at getting into mischief, but weak enough at getting out of it, I see.

NIKITA. What is to be done?

ANISYA. I say go into the cellar and dig a hole.

NIKITA. But you find some other way.

ANISYA (*mocking him*). Some other way! It's impossible. You ought to have thought of this before. Go where you're sent.

NIKITA. Akh! trouble! trouble!

SCENE IX

The Same, and ANYUTKA

ANYUTKA. Mamushka! Granny's calling. Sister's surely got a baby! It's squalling, as true as I'm alive!

ANISYA. What are you gabbling about; plague take you! It's some cats yowling there. Go into the izba and go to bed, or I'll give it to you.

ANYUTKA. But, my dear mamushka, I'm right, as true as there's a God....

ANISYA (*threatens her*). I'll give it to you. Don't let me hear a sound from you! (ANYUTKA *runs out. Addressing* NIKITA.) Go, do what I told you, or else look out! (*Exit.*)

SCENE X

NIKITA (*alone; is silent a long time*). Now this is trouble! Oh, these women! It's a shame! "You ought to have thought of this before," said she. When could I have thought of it? When could I? Why it was only last summer Anisya here began to follow me. Well, what of it? Am I a monk? The master died and I atoned for the sin as I was in duty bound. It wasn't my fault. Aren't there lots of such cases? And then those powders. Did I suggest her doing such a thing? If I had known about it then I'd have

killed her on the spot — the bitch! Truly I'd have killed her! She's made me a partner in these vile doings — the wretch! She grew disgusting to me from that moment! As soon as mother told me — then she grew disgusting, she grew disgusting to me; my eyes would n't look at her! How can I live with her? And so this came about!.... This girl began to hang about me. What was it to me? If I had n't done it, some one else would. And now this has come! And this was n't my fault either. Okh! what troubles!.... (*Sits down and ponders.*) Well, those women are bold!.... What have they concocted now? I certainly won't meddle with it!

Scene XI

Nikita *and* Matriona

Matriona (*enters in haste, with lantern and a spade*). What are you sitting there for, like a hen on a roost? Did n't your wife tell you to do something? It 's all ready.

Nikita. What are you going to do?

Matriona. Well we know what to do; you attend to your own affairs.

Nikita. You are trying to involve me.

Matriona. What are you talking about? Do you expect to get out of it? You go so far, and try to crawl out!

Nikita. But you see this is such a crime! Why, it 's a living soul!

Matriona. A living soul, is it? Why, there 's scarcely any life in it! And what could you do with it, anyway? If you went and took it to the Foundling Hospital, it would die just the same. And the betrothal would stop, and every one would know about it, and the girl would be left on our hands!

Nikita. But supposing it should be known?

Matriona. In one's own house one can do things.

We can do it so that it won't smell. Only do what I bid you. This is not a woman's work; we can't get along without a man. Here, take the spade and crawl down under there and make the place ready. I 'll hold the light.

NIKITA. Make what place ready?

MATRIONA (*in a whisper*). Dig a hole. Then we 'll bring it and put it in lively. There she is calling again. Go and see. I will come.

NIKITA. But tell me, is it dead?

MATRIONA. Certainly it 's dead. Only you must make haste. The people have n't gone to bed yet. They have their ears and their eyes open; they have to know everything, the dogs! And the Uryadnik was here this evening. So here 's for you! (*Gives him the spade.*) Get down into the cellar. Dig a hole in one corner; the soil is soft there; then you can smooth it over again. Mother Earth[1] won't tell any one how the cow licks with her tongue. Go on; go, my dear!

NIKITA. You are trying to involve me! Hang you! Truly, I am going. Do what you please by yourselves.

SCENE XII

The Same, and ANISYA

ANISYA (*outside the door*). Well, has he dug it yet?

MATRIONA. Why did you come away? Where is it?

ANISYA. I covered it with a sacking. It won't be heard. Say, has he dug it?

MATRIONA. He won't do it.

ANISYA (*flies into a passion*). Won't do it! Do you want to feed the vermin in prison? .... I 'll go this minute and tell the Uryadnik! It 'll be all the same. I 'll certainly tell him this minute.

NIKITA (*panic-struck*). What is that you say?

ANISYA. What? I 'll tell the whole story! Who took

[1] *Zemlya Matushka.*

the money? You did! (NIKITA *is silent.*) And who gave him the poison? I gave it. But you knew it, you knew it, you knew it! I was in league with you.

MATRIONA. There, that 'll do. Mikishka, why are you so obstinate? Now, what is to be done? You must help! Go on, little berry!

ANISYA. Would you mind! What a chicken-liver! Won't do it! You've abused me long enough, now end it! You 've run over me long enough, now it 's my turn. Go on, I say, or else I 'll do something!.... Na! there 's the spade? Na! go on!

NIKITA. There now, why press me so? (*Takes the spade, but hesitates.*) I don't want to, I won't do it!

ANISYA. You won't do it? (*She begins to call.*) Help here! hey-y-y!

MATRIONA (*covers her mouth*). What are you doing? Are you out of your mind? He 'll do it.... Go on, little son; go on, dear!

ANISYA. I will certainly summon the guard!

NIKITA. There now, hush! Ekh! what people! Be lively about it, will you! It 's all the same. (*Goes to the cellar.*)

MATRIONA. Yes, little berry, that 's the way it goes. You may have a good time, but you must take the consequences.

ANISYA (*still excited*). He 's come it over me long enough with his mistress. I won't be the only one; let him be a murderer, too. He 'll know what it means!

MATRIONA. There, there, she 's raging hot! Now, my dear little girl, don't be impatient; be calm; take it gently, that 's the best way! Go back to the girl. He 'll do the work. (*Follows* NIKITA *with the lantern.* NIKITA *crawls down into the cellar.*)

ANISYA. I 'll make him smother his dirty cub! (*Still excited.*) I was the only one to be tormented about Piotr's bones. Let him learn what it is! I have no pity on myself — I tell you, I have no pity on myself.

NIKITA (*from the cellar*). Let us have some light!

MATRIONA (*holds down the light. To* ANISYA). He 's digging; go bring it.

ANISYA. Watch him; if you don't, the scoundrel, he 'll be sneaking off. I 'll go and bring it.

MATRIONA. See here, don't you forget to christen it. Or else I 'll do it. Have you a cross for it? [1]

ANISYA. I 'll find one; I know where. (*Exit.*)

SCENE XIII

MATRIONA *alone, and* NIKITA *in the cellar*

MATRIONA. How sharp she spoke, that woman! There 's no denying it 's insulting. Well, glory be to God, we 'll soon have this matter settled, and no one will know anything about it.[2] We 'll get the girl off our hands without any trouble.[3] Then my little son will be able to live in peace. The house, glory be to God, is well furnished, and they won't forget me, either. What would have become of them if it had n't been for Matriona? They would n't have had an idea what to do! (*Bending toward the cellar.*) Tell me, are you ready, my son?

NIKITA (*crawls out, just his head visible*). What, is it there? Bring it along! Why are you so slow about it? I suppose it 's got to be done.

SCENE XIV

The Same, and ANISYA

(MATRIONA *enters the entry and meets* ANISYA. ANISYA *enters with the baby wrapped up in rags.*)

MATRIONA. Well, did you christen it?

ANISYA. Certainly I did. I took it away by main force; she did not want to give it up. (*Approaches* NIKITA, *and hands him the baby.*)

[1] In case of emergency a person, even though not a priest, may give valid baptism to a dying infant.

[2] Idiom: *Kontsui f vodu;* literally, the ends in the water.

[3] *Bez grekham;* literally, without sins.

NIKITA (*refuses to take it*). Carry it down yourself!

ANISYA. Take it, I say! (*Flings the child at him.*)

NIKITA (*catches it*). It 's alive! Oh, mother, my own mother![1] It moves! It 's alive! What shall I do with it?....

ANISYA (*snatches the baby out of his hands and flings it into the cellar*). Choke it quick and it won't be alive. (*Pushes* NIKITA *down cellar.*) It 's your affair; finish it!

MATRIONA (*sits on the step*). He 's tender-hearted. It 's hard for him, poor fellow. Well, supposing he is? It 's his fault.

(ANISYA *stands near the cellar.* MATRIONA *sits on the doorstep, looks at her, and ponders.*)

MATRIONA. I-i-i! How scared he is! Well, hard as it is, it can't be avoided. What could be done with it? Just think how other people pray for children; and then God does n't grant them, or they 're still-born. That 's the way it is with the pope's wife!.... And here this one is n't wanted, and it 's alive! (*Peers down into the cellar.*) It must be all over. (*To* ANISYA.) How is it?

ANISYA (*peering into the cellar*). He 's covered it with a board; he 's sitting on the board. It must be all over.

MATRIONA. O — okh! You 'd be glad not to do the sin; but how could it be helped?

NIKITA (*crawls up all of a tremble*). It 's still alive! I can't do it! It 's alive!

ANISYA. Suppose it is alive? Where are you going? (*Tries to hold him.*)

NIKITA (*rushes at her*). Away with you, or I 'll kill you! (*Seizes her by the arm; she tears herself away from him; he runs after her with his spade.* MATRIONA *rushes to intercept him, and stops him.* ANISYA *runs to the doorsteps.* MATRIONA *tries to take away the spade from him.*)

NIKITA (*to his mother*). I 'll kill you, too! Go away;

[1] *Matushka rodimaya;* literally, my own little mother; or perhaps like the Italian peasant exclamation, *Mamma mia!* — ED.

I 'll kill you! (MATRIONA *runs to* ANISYA *on the steps.* NIKITA *pauses.*) I 'll kill you! I 'll kill you all!

MATRIONA. This comes from his fright. It 's nothing. He 'll get over it.

NIKITA. Why have they done this? What have they made me do? How it wailed!.... How it crunched under me! What have they made me do?.... And it 's still alive! truly it 's alive! (*He is silent and listens.*) It 's screaming! There, it 's screaming! (*Runs back to the cellar.*)

MATRIONA (*to* ANISYA). There he goes; he 's going to bury it, most likely. Nikita, don't you want the lantern?

NIKITA (*without replying, listens near the cellar*). I don't hear anything. It was my imagination. (*Walks a little farther, and pauses.*) How its little bones cracked under me!.... Kr!.... kr!.... What have they made me do? (*He listens again.*) There it 's crying again, surely it is! What does it mean? Matushka, oh, matushka! (*Goes toward her.*)

MATRIONA. What is it, little son?

NIKITA. Oh, mother, I cannot endure it any more. I cannot stand it! Mother dearest, pity me!

MATRIONA. Okh! you are just frightened, my dear fellow. Go, go and get some brandy! Drink some, and it will brace you up.

NIKITA. Mother dear, it 's come to me now! What have you made me do? How those little bones cracked and how it screamed! Mother dear, what have you made me do? (*He goes away and sits on a sledge.*)

MATRIONA. Go, my dear, and get a drink. It is rather cruel to do such a thing at night. But after a while, when morning comes and you see the daylight, it will be a different thing. Just wait; we 'll marry off the girl and we'll forget all about it. And now go and get a drink. I 'll put everything to rights in the cellar.

NIKITA (*starts up*). Is there any liquor left? I might drink a little. (*Exit.*)

(ANISYA, *who has been standing all the time at the entry, silently steps aside.*)

Scene XV

MATRIONA *and* ANISYA

MATRIONA. Go; go, little berry. I'll finish up the work. I'll go down my own self and fill up the hole. Where did he throw down the spade? (*She finds the spade and descends into cellar till she is only half seen.*) Anisya, come here; give me a little light!

ANISYA. Why does n't he do it?

MATRIONA. He 's half sick with terror. You see, you were very hard on him. Let him be! He 'll come to himself. God help him! I 'll do the work myself. Put the lantern here. I can see then. (MATRIONA *goes down into the cellar.*)

ANISYA (*at the door where* NIKITA *made his exit*). Well, have you had your good time out? You cut a wide swath.[1] Now you 'll know how it is yourself. You 'll come off your high horse!

Scene XVI

The Same, and NIKITA

NIKITA (*hurries out of the entry toward the cellar*). Matushka, say, matushka!

MATRIONA (*appearing at the entrance of the cellar*). What do you want, little son?

NIKITA (*listens*). Don't bury it! Don't you hear? It 's alive! Hear it scream!.... There! distinctly!

MATRIONA. Where is it screaming? You crushed it as flat as a pancake! You crushed its head all in!

NIKITA. What is that? (*Stops his ears.*) It still wails! I have ruined my life — ruined it! What have they made me do?.... Where shall I go?.... (*Sits on the steps.*)

CURTAIN

[1] *Shirok tui buil;* literally, broad you were.

Variant

In place of Scenes XIII., XIV., XV., and XVI., Act IV., the following Variant may be read.

TABLEAU

THE IZBA OF ACT I

Scene I

(Anyutka, *undressed, lies on the sleeping bench covered with a kaftan.* Mitritch *sits on the bunk and smokes.*)

Mitritch. Oh, what a stench they 've let loose. May pie and peas choke 'em! They must have spilt something. Not even with tobacco can I stifle it! It gets into the nose so! O Lord; well, let 's go to sleep. (*Goes to the lamp to put it out.*)

Anyutka (*startled, sits up*). Grandfather, don't put out the light, please![1]

Mitritch. Why not put it out?

Anyutka. What a noise they are making in the yard! (*Listens.*) Do you hear? they went into the barn again!

Mitritch. What is that to you? They are not asking for you, are they? Lie down and go to sleep. I 'll turn down the light. (*Turns it down.*)

Anyutka. Grandfather, darling! Don't put it quite out. Leave just enough for a mouse's little eye, else I shall feel timid.

Mitritch (*laughs*). Well, all right, all right. (*Sits down near her.*) What are you timid about?

Anyutka. How can I help being, grandfather! How sister writhed. She beat her head against the floor! (*In*

[1] She calls him *dyedushka*, little grandfather, and *galubchik*, little dove; also, just below, *zolotoï*, golden one. Of course they are not related.

a whisper.) You see, I know. .... She was going to have a little baby born. .... I 'm sure it 's born already. ....

MITRITCH. Oh, what a crazy girl! Always on the jump! You have to know all that 's going on. Lie down and go to sleep. (ANYUTKA *lies down.*) There, that 's right! (*Covers her up.*) There, that 's right! If you know so much, you 'll soon be growing old.

ANYUTKA. Are you going to climb up on the stove?

MITRITCH. Where else should I go? .... How stupid you are! You have to know all that 's going on. (*Covers her up again and gets up to go.*) There now, lie down and go to sleep. (*Goes toward the stove.*)

ANYUTKA. It cried once, but now I don't hear it any more.

MITRITCH. O Lord, blessed Mikola! .... What is it you don't hear any more?

ANYUTKA. The baby.

MITRITCH. Since there is n't one, you most likely don't hear it.

ANYUTKA. But I did hear it; as true as I breathe, I heard it. Such a shrill little cry!

MITRITCH. You hear all sorts of things. And have you heard how the bug-a-boo Letoseka takes little girls like you and puts them into his bag.

ANYUTKA. What is this Letoseka?

MITRITCH. Why, he is a bug-a-boo! (*Climbs on the stove.*) Ah! the stove feels warm to-day; it 's good! Lovely! O Lord, blessed Mikola!

ANYUTKA. Grandfather! are you going to sleep?

MITRITCH. What else do you suppose? shall I sing songs? (*Silence.*)

ANYUTKA. Grandfather, oh, grandfather! They are digging, really,[1] they are digging. Don't you hear? As true as I 'm alive, they 're digging!

MITRITCH. What imagination you have! digging? digging at night! Who 's digging? The cow is scratching herself, and you think — they are digging! Go to sleep, I say, or I 'll put out the light this instant.

ANYUTKA. Dearest grandfather! Don't put it out.

[1] *Yeī Bogu*, By God.

I won't any more, honest I won't! It seems awful to me!

MITRITCH. Awful to you! Don't be afraid, and it won't seem awful to you. But they say they amount to pretty much the same thing. How can it help seeming awful when you 're afraid? Oh, what a stupid little girl. (*Silence. A cricket.*)

ANYUTKA (*in a whisper*). Grandfather, oh, grandfather, are you asleep?

MITRITCH. What is it this time?

ANYUTKA. What kind of a thing is the Letoseka?

MITRITCH. This is the way of it. When he finds any little girl like you not asleep, he comes with his sack and chucks her into it, pops his head into it, lifts up her little shirt and switches her.

ANYUTKA. But what does he whip her with?

MITRITCH. He takes a broom.

ANYUTKA. But he can't see her in the sack, can he?

MITRITCH. Never you fear, he can!

ANYUTKA. But I 'll bite him.

MITRITCH. No, my dear, you won't bite him!

ANYUTKA. Grandfather, some one is coming. Who is it? Aï! ye saints![1] who is it?

MITRITCH. Suppose some one is coming! What 's that to you? Your mother 's coming, I guess.

SCENE II

The Same, and ANISYA

ANISYA (*enters*). Anyutka! (ANYUTKA *pretends to be asleep.*) Mitritch!

MITRITCH. What is it?

ANISYA. What are you burning a light for? We shall sleep in the summer izba.

MITRITCH. I 've only just put things to rights. I 'll put the light out.

[1] *Matushki rodimuiya;* literally, own mothers. In the sentence before, Mitritch calls the little girl *bratyets*, little brother.

ANISYA (*searches in her chest and mutters to herself*). When you want a thing you never can find it.

MITRITCH. What are you hunting for?

ANISYA. I 'm hunting for a cross. It 's got to be christened. God have mercy if it should die unchristened! It would be a sin.

MITRITCH. Why, of course everything must be done in due form. .... Say, have you found it?

ANISYA. Yes, I 've found it. (*Exit.*)

SCENE III

MITRITCH *and* ANYUTKA

MITRITCH. All right; if she had n't I 'd have given her mine. O Lord!

ANYUTKA (*starts up all of a tremble*). O-oh, grandfather! Don't go to sleep, for Christ's sake! How horrible it is!

MITRITCH. What is horrible?

ANYUTKA. It will die, I know it will — the poor little baby! Grandma christened Aunt Arina's baby and it died the same way.

MITRITCH. If it dies, they 'll bury it.

ANYUTKA. Well, perhaps it would n't die, but grandma Matriona is there. You see, I heard what grandma said; as true as I 'm alive, I heard.

MITRITCH. What did you hear? Go to sleep, I say. Cover your head up, that is all!

ANYUTKA. But if it lived I would nurse it.

MITRITCH (*bellows*). O Lord!

ANYUTKA. Where will they put it?

MITRITCH. They 'll put it where it 's proper. It 's not your funeral. Go to sleep, I say. Here, your mother 'll be coming. She 'll give it to you. (*Silence.*)

ANYUTKA. Grandfather! You said they did n't kill that little girl.

MITRITCH. Which one do you mean? Oh, that little girl grew up.

ANYUTKA. Grandfather, tell me; how did you say they found her?

MITRITCH. Yes, they found her.

ANYUTKA. But where did they find her? Tell me.

MITRITCH. They found her in some one 's house. The soldiers came to a village and began to pillage the houses, and there that very same little girl was lying on her belly. They wanted to put an end to her. But then I felt sorry for her and I took her in my arms, but she did n't want to be taken. She made herself heavy as if a hundred pounds were in her, and she clung with her hands to everything that came in her way, and you could not make her let go. Well, I took her and patted her on the head, on the head. She was as shaggy as a hedgehog! I smoothed her and smoothed her, and at last she calmed down. I soaked a biscuit and gave it to her. She understood that. She devoured it. But what was to be done with her? We took her. We took her and began to feed her and feed her, and she got used to us; we used to take her on our expeditions; wherever we went she went. She was a pretty little girl.

ANYUTKA. Well, was n't she christened?

MITRITCH. Who knows? They used to say she was n't properly christened. Because her people were n't of our kind.

ANYUTKA. Germans?

MITRITCH. That 's just like you! Germans — no, not Germans, but Asiatics. They were just like Jews, but they were n't Jews either. Sort of Polyaks, but Asiatics. Krudlin .... Kruglin .... is their name. But I forget. We called the little girl Sashka .... Sashka .... and she was pretty. You see, I 've forgotten everything but that little girl — may she have all that 's good![1] I seem to see her this minute. She 's all I remember out of my whole service. I remember how they flogged me, and that girl I remember. She used to hang round my neck, and I 'd carry her. She was such a fine girl; you would n't look for a better any-

[1] Literally, may her mouth be filled with a sifted flour pirog and peas.

where. Then we gave her away. The colonel's wife adopted her. And she grew up. How the soldiers worshiped her!

ANYUTKA. Well, grandfather, I remember how papa died. You were n't living with us then. He called Mikita, and said to him, "Forgive me," says he, "Mikita"; and he cried. (*Sighs.*) How sad, was n't it?

MITRITCH. Well, so it was. ....

ANYUTKA. Grandfather, oh, grandfather! what a noise they 're making in the cellar again! Aï! Oh, ye saints![1] Oh, grandfather, they 're doing something to it! They 'll kill it! Such a tiny little thing — O-oh!" (*Covers her head and cries.*)

MITRITCH (*listens*). They 're certainly up to some deviltry, blast them! These women are vile! You can't praise muzhiks, but these women .... These are like wild beasts. They 're not afraid of anything.

ANYUTKA (*lifts herself up*). Grandfather, oh, grandfather!

MITRITCH. Well, what is it now?

ANYUTKA. Lately a traveler spent the night here. He said that when a little one dies, its soul goes straight to heaven. Is that true?

MITRITCH. Who knows? It must be so. What of it?

ANYUTKA. But supposing I were to die? (*Whispers.*)

MITRITCH. If you died, you 'd be out of the account.

ANYUTKA. One is a child till she 's ten years old; her soul might go to God then; but afterward, you see, she gets spoiled.

MITRITCH. Indeed she gets spoiled; how can you women help getting spoiled? Who teaches you? What do you see? What do you hear? Nothing but base things! Though I don't have much learning, still I know something, — not very well grounded, but better than a peasant woman in the country. What is a country peasant woman? Just mire! There are more than a million of you in Russia, and all like blind moles.

[1] *Matushki sestritsui-golubushki;* literally, little mothers, little sisters, dear little pigeons.

You don't know anything! How to cast death spells on a cow, and all kinds of witchcraft, and how to make children roost in the hen-house with the hens — they know all that!

ANYUTKA. Mamushka has done that.

MITRITCH. Of course she has![1] How many millions of you women, yes, and girls, too, and all like beasts of the forest! As you 're born, so you die! You don't see anything, you don't hear anything! The muzhik .... he goes to the tavern, or even to the prison .... and he hears something there, or in the army, as I was, and learns. But the peasant woman, what can she do? She does not know much of anything about God, and she does n't know anything reasonable about Friday! Friday, Friday, — but ask her what Friday is, she does n't know! They crawl around like puppies with their eyes unopened and sticking their heads into the mud. .... All they know is their foolish songs: *Ho-ho, ho-ho!* .... But what does *Ho-ho* mean? They themselves have n't an idea! ....

ANYUTKA. But, grandfather, I know the Lord's Prayer[2] half through.

MITRITCH. You know lots! One can't expect much of you. Who teaches you? No one but a drunken muzhik with a rope sometimes. That's the only teaching you have. So I don't know who will be responsible for you. There 's an officer to look after the recruits. But there 's no one to be responsible for you women. So you are a shepherdless flock, most troublesome cattle. Oh, these women, they 're the stupidest of all creatures — a most empty-headed class!

ANYUTKA. But what can we do?

MITRITCH. Don't bother yourself! .... Cover your head up and go to sleep! O Lord! (*Silence. The cricket.*)

ANYUTKA (*suddenly sits up*). Grandfather! some one 's screaming! There 's some one in trouble! Mercy

[1] Mitritch says, "*A to-to i ono-to*"; literally, "But this-this and it-this."

[2] *Votcha*, for the Slavonic *Otche nash*.

on me! some one's screaming! Grandfather dear, they're coming here!

MITRITCH. I say, cover your head.

SCENE IV

The Same, NIKITA *and* MATRIONA

NIKITA (*enters*). What have these women made me do? What have they made me do?

MATRIONA. Drink, little berry; drink some brandy. What's the matter with you? (*Gets the liquor and sets it out.*)

NIKITA. Give it here, perhaps I might drink.

MITRITCH. Hush! You see, they aren't asleep. There, drink.

NIKITA. What made you do that! Why did you plan such a thing? You might have taken it somewhere!

MATRIONA (*in a whisper*). Sit down, sit down here. Have another drink, or else smoke. It will settle your thoughts.

NIKITA. My dear mother, this has hit me hard. How it squealed, and how those little bones crackled under me .... kr — kr. It unmanned me!

MATRIONA. I-i! What you say has no sense to it. It's all right .... you feel a little timid at night-time, but just wait till dawn; as soon as day comes you'll forget all about it. (*She approaches* NIKITA *and lays her hand on his shoulder.*)

NIKITA. Go away from me! What have you made me do?

MATRIONA. Tell me, my little son, what is really the matter with you? (*Takes him by the hand.*)

NIKITA. Go away from me! I'll kill you! It's all the same to me now. I'll kill you!

MATRIONA. Akh! akh! how frightened you are! There now; you'd better go to bed.

NIKITA. I've nowhere to go to; I'm lost!

MATRIONA (*shakes her head*). Okh! okh! I must go and finish that job. He 'll sit here for a while; then he 'll get over it. (*Exit.*)

SCENE V

NIKITA, MITRITCH, *and* ANYUTKA

NIKITA (*sits down, covering his face with his hands.* MITRITCH *and* ANYUTKA *are silent as death*). It squeals, truly it squeals — there .... there — plain as day. She 'll bury it, truly, she 'll bury it! (*Runs to the door.*) Matushka! don't bury it — it 's alive! ....

SCENE VI

The Same, and MATRIONA

MATRIONA (*returning; in a whisper*). What 's the matter with you? Christ be with you! What are you dreaming about? How could it be alive? Why, all its little bones were broken to pieces.

NIKITA. Give me some more liquor. (*Drinks.*)

MATRIONA. Go, little son! You 'll sleep now. It 's nothing.

NIKITA (*stands listening*). It 's still alive! .... there .... it 's squealing! Don't you hear it? There!

MATRIONA (*in a whisper*). Nothing of the sort!

NIKITA. Dear mother! I have decided my fate. What have you made me do? Where shall I go? (*Runs out of the izba,* MATRIONA *following him.*)

SCENE VII

MITRITCH *and* ANYUTKA

ANYUTKA. Grandfather, dear! galubchik! they have been killing it!

MITRITCH (*sternly*). Go to sleep! I say. May the frogs kick you! I 'll beat you with a broom! Go to sleep, I say!

ANYUTKA. Grandfather, golden one! Something clutches me by my little shoulder; clutches me, I tell you, clutches me with its claws! Dear grandfather, as true as I 'm alive, I 'm coming to you. Grandfather, golden one, let me climb up on the stove! Let me come to you for Christ's sake! It clutches me — it clutches me .... Aa! (*She runs to the stove.*)

MITRITCH. Ish! how they scared the poor little girl. They 're vile; may the frogs kick 'em! Well, climb up here.

ANYUTKA (*climbs up on the stove*). Don't go away and leave me.

MITRITCH. Where should I go? Climb up! climb up! O Lord! Mikola the blessed! O most holy mother of God of Kazan!.... How they scared the poor little girl! There, then, you silly little girl! truly you 're a little goose!.... How they frightened her, the vile wretches; may they be choked with pie and peas!

CURTAIN

ACT V

PERSONAGES IN ACT V

NIKITA.
ANISYA.
AKULINA.
AKIM.
MATRIONA.
ANYUTKA.
MARINA.
MARINA'S HUSBAND.
FIRST GIRL.
SECOND GIRL.
URYADNIK.
IZVOSHCHIK.
WEDDING MARSHAL.
MATCHMAKER.
AKULINA'S HUSBAND.
STAROSTA.

Guests, women, girls, people at the wedding

A threshing-floor. In the foreground a rick of grain; at the left a platform; at the right the barn; the barn doors are open, straw in the doorway; in the distance

can be seen the dvor; songs and bells are heard. Two girls are discovered coming along the path in front of the barn to the izba.

Scene I

Two Girls

First Girl. There, do you see how we got along? We have n't soiled our shoes. But by way of the village it 's a caution; filthy! (*They stop and wipe their feet on the straw. The first girl peers into the straw and sees something.*) What 's that there?

Second Girl (*looks carefully*). That 's Mitritch, their man; see how drunk he is!

First Girl. But I thought he never drank!

Second Girl. Evidently he 's been drinking to-day.

First Girl. Look! evidently he came here after straw. You see he 's got a rope in his hand, and he must have fallen asleep.

Second Girl (*listens*). They 're still singing the couple's praises! They can't have got through the congratulations yet. Akulina, they say, did not lament at all.[1]

First Girl. Mamushka said she did n't marry of her own free will. Her stepfather threatened her, else she would never have married. That 's what they say about her.

Scene II

The Same, and Marina

Marina (*overtakes the girls*). How are you, girls?

The Girls. How are you, auntie?

Marina. Been at the wedding, little ones?

[1] At a typical wedding among the Russian people a chorus of women and girls praise the bride and bridegroom with elaborate comparisons. The bride, who has been compared to the red sun and the moon and to various beautiful birds, replies with a lamentation over her past youth and her better fate. If she does not, something is wrong.

First Girl. Yes, it's all over now. We came to look on.

Marina. Please call out my old man, Semyon of Zuevo. You know him, I guess.

First Girl. Of course I do. He's a relation of the bridegroom's.

Marina. Certainly. The bridegroom is my man's nephew.

Second Girl. Why don't you go yourself? Don't you want to go to the wedding?

Marina. I don't care anything for it, little girl, and have no time. Must be going. We didn't count on coming to the wedding. We were going to town with some oats. We stopped to bait our horse, and they invited my old man.

First Girl. Where did you go? to Feodoruitch's?

Marina. Yes. I'll just stay here; and you just go call him, dearie, call my old man. Bring him out, darling. Tell him: "Your wife Marina wants to go; the hostlers are harnessing."

First Girl. All right, if you won't go yourself.

(*The girls exeunt along the path leading to the yard. Songs and bells are heard.*)

Scene III

Marina (*alone*)

Marina (*soliloquizes*). I suppose I might go, but I don't care anything about it, because I have not seen him since the time he threw me over. It's the second year. But I should like to see with my own eyes how he lives with his Anisya. People say they're not harmonious. She's a rough, self-asserting woman. I reckon he's thought of me more than once. He hankered after a comfortable life. He took her instead of me. Well, God be with him. I bear no ill-will against him. Then it was insulting to me.... Akh!

it was painful. But now I 've got over it and forgotten it. But I should like to have a look at him..... (*She looks toward the dvor and sees* NIKITA.) Would you mind! Why is he coming? Could the girls have told him? Why has he left the guests? I 'll go away.

SCENE IV

MARINA *and* NIKITA

(NIKITA *walks along at first with head bent, swinging his arms, and muttering.*)

MARINA. Why, how melancholy he seems!

NIKITA (*sees* MARINA *and recognizes her*). Marina! dear friend, Marinushka. What brings you here?

MARINA. I came after my husband.[1]

NIKITA. Why did n't you come to the wedding? You would have seen how it was, and laughed at me.

MARINA. Why should I have laughed at you? I came after my husband.

NIKITA. Ekh, Marinushka! (*Tries to embrace her.*)

MARINA (*tears herself away angrily*). Now, Mikita, put an end to those tricks. What used to be has gone by. I came after my husband. He 's in your house, isn't he?

NIKITA. That means you won't remember old times, does it? You forbid it, do you?

MARINA. I put the old times out of my remembrance. What has been is past.

NIKITA. You mean you won't come back?

MARINA. It never will come back. But tell me why have you come out? You are the master, and here you have left the wedding!

NIKITA (*sits on the straw*). Why have I come out? Ekh! if you only knew and could see!.... I felt gloomy, Marina; so gloomy, I could n't see out of my eyes. So I crept away from the table, and came out, came away from people, so as not to see any one.

[1] *Starik,* old man. In the next speech she calls him her *khozyaïn.*

MARINA (*comes nearer to him*). What is the matter?

NIKITA. Something so that in eating I can't eat it away, and in drinking I can't drink it away, and in sleeping I can't sleep it away. Akh! it's loathsome to me, so loathsome! And worse than all, Marinushka, I am alone, and have no one to share my sorrow with.

MARINA. No one, Nikita, lives without sorrow. I cried over mine, and it has passed away.

NIKITA. That was about the former day, about the old times. Oh, my dear! You cried over your trouble, but now it has come to me!

MARINA. What is it?

NIKITA. Something which has made my whole life disgusting to me. I am disgusted with myself. Ekh! Marina, you were n't able to keep me, and so you ruined me and yourself too. Tell me, is this living?

MARINA (*stands by the barn weeping and trying to restrain herself*). I do not complain of my life, Nikita. May God give all men as good! I do not complain. I confessed everything to my old man. He forgave me. And he never reproaches me. And I cannot find fault with my life. My husband is kind. He likes me, and I wash and dress his children. He sympathizes with me. Why should I complain? This has evidently been God's judgment. And what is the matter with your life? As far as wealth goes ....

NIKITA. My life? .... Except that I don't want to cloud the wedding, I would take a rope — this one here (*he picks up the rope from the straw*) — and I 'd throw it over. Then I 'd make a nice little noose, and I 'd climb up and put my head in it. That 's what my life is!

MARINA. There, there! Christ be with you!

NIKITA. Do you think I am joking? Do you think I am drunk? I am not drunk. To-day drunkenness[1] did not take hold of me. But I am eaten up with melancholy, with melancholy. At the dinner, when I was eating, nothing tasted good to me. Ekh! Marinushka, the only life I ever had was with you; do you

[1] *Khmyel'*; literally, hops.

remember how we used to kill the time those nights at the station?

MARINA. Nikita, don't touch the place where it pains. I have taken on the law, and so have you. My sin has been pardoned; don't bring up the past. ....

NIKITA. What can I do with my heart? Where shall I hide myself?

MARINA. What shall you do? You have a wife; don't lust after other women, but cherish your own. You used to love Anisya — love her still.

NIKITA. Ekh! That Anisya is as bitter as wormwood to me! Just like witch-grass she twined herself round me.

MARINA. Whatever she is, she 's your wife. .... Why talk so foolishly? You 'd better go to your guests, and send my husband out to me.

NIKITA. Ekh! if you only knew the whole trouble! But then, what 's to be said?

SCENE V

NIKITA, MARINA, *her* HUSBAND, *and* ANYUTKA

MARINA'S HUSBAND (*comes out of the dvor flushed and drunk*). Marina! Wife! Old woman! Where are you?

NIKITA. Here 's your husband coming; he 's calling for you. Go!

MARINA. What are you going to do?

NIKITA. I? I 'll lie here. (*Flings himself down in the straw.*)

MARINA'S HUSBAND. Where is she?

ANYUTKA. Here she is, uncle, near the barn.

MARINA'S HUSBAND. What are you standing here for? Go in to the wedding. The host and hostess bid you come, and do them the honor. The wedding will be over soon, and then we 'll go.

MARINA (*goes toward her* HUSBAND). Well, I did n't care to.

MARINA'S HUSBAND. Go, I say. You 'll drink a little glass, and congratulate Petrunka, the rascal. The folks 'll feel offended; we 'll have time enough for all our business.

(MARINA'S HUSBAND *puts his arm round her, and, staggering, goes up with her.*)

SCENE VI

NIKITA *and* ANYUTKA

NIKITA (*gets up, then sits on the straw*). Ekh! I 've seen her; and I feel gloomier than ever. The only joy I ever had was with her. I have ruined my whole life all for nothing! I have ruined myself[1] completely. (*Lies down.*) Where can I go? Akh! Open and swallow me, moist Mother Earth!

ANYUTKA (*sees* NIKITA *and runs to him*). Father, oh, father,[2] they 're asking for you. All of them have given their congratulations — even the godfather! As true as I breathe, they 've already given their congratulations; they 'll be angry with you!

NIKITA (*to himself*). Where shall I hide?

ANYUTKA. What is the matter with you? What are you saying?

NIKITA. I 'm not saying anything. What are you chasing me for?

ANYUTKA. Father! Come, let us go! (NIKITA *is silent.* ANYUTKA *pulls him by the hand.*) Batya! Come and give them your blessing. Truly they are angry; they 're saying hard things about you.

NIKITA (*snatches away his hand*). Let me be!

ANYUTKA. There now!

NIKITA (*threatens her with the reins*). Get you gone, I say! else I 'll give it to you.

ANYUTKA. Then I 'll send mamushka. (*She runs away.*)

[1] Literally, my head. [2] *Batyushka.*

Scene VII

Nikita (*alone*)

Nikita (*gets up*). Now how can I go? How can I take the holy image? How can I look into her eyes? (*Lies down again.*) Okh! if only the damp earth would open and let me hide there! Then folks would n't see me, they 'd never see me more. (*Again he gets up.*) No, I won't go!.... May they perish, every one of 'em! I won't go! (*He takes off his boots and picks up the rope; then he makes a noose with it and fits it to his neck.*) This is the way!

Scene VIII

Nikita *and* Matriona

(Nikita *sees his mother, takes off the rope from his neck, and lies down again in the straw.*)

Matriona (*comes hastily up to him*). Mikita, oh, Mikita! Would you mind, he does n't even answer! Mikita, what 's the matter with you? or are you drunk? Come, Mikitushka; come, little berry! The people are waiting.

Nikita. Akh! what have you made me do? I am unmanned.

Matriona. Tell me, what 's the matter? Come, dear, give them the honor of your blessing; and it 'll be done with. See, the people are waiting.

Nikita. How can I give them my blessing?

Matriona. It 's easy enough. Don't you know how?

Nikita. I know, I know. But who is it I 'm to bless? What have I done with her?

Matriona. What have you done? The idea of remembering such a thing! No one knows anything

about it — neither cat nor king![1] And the girl marries of her own accord.

NIKITA. How does she?

MATRIONA. Well, of course, there was some threat used. But she marries all the same. And what else could be done? She should have counted the cost beforehand. It 's too late for her to resist. There 's no complaint from the matchmakers. They inspected the girl twice, and she 's got money. All is settled and covered.

NIKITA. But what 's in the cellar?

MATRIONA. What 's in the cellar? Cabbages, mushrooms, potatoes, I reckon. Why recall what 's past?

NIKITA. I should be glad not to, but I can't help it. When my thoughts turn on it, then I hear it. Okh! what have you made me do?

MATRIONA. Why do you make up such wry faces?

NIKITA (*turns over and lies on his face*). Matushka! Don't torment me! I have more than I can bear.

MATRIONA. But still you must do it. The people, even as it is, are talking; and here the father suddenly goes out and does n't come back! He 's afraid to give his blessing! They 're going to kiss the images immediately. If you show yourself so timid they 'll instantly suspect. Walk boldly if you don't want to be taken for a thief.[2] If you run from the wolf you fall into bruin's paws. Above all, don't show your feelings; don't be timid, my boy, or else they 'll put on it the worst construction.

NIKITA. Ekh! you have entrapped me!

MATRIONA. There now, stop, and let us go! Come, give them your blessing. Let everything be done honorably and that 'll be the end of it.

(NIKITA *still lies on his face.*)

[1] *Ni kot, ni koshka,*
Ni pop Yermoshka:
Neither grimalkin, nor pussy-cat, nor the priest Yermoshka.

[2] Another of Matriona's rhymed bits of wisdom:

Khodi torom
Nye polozhat vorom.

MATRIONA (*to herself*). Now what has happened to him? He was all right before; it came upon him suddenly. It 's evidently an affliction. Nikita, get up! Look, here comes Anisya. She has left the guests!

SCENE IX

NIKITA, MATRIONA, *and* ANISYA

ANISYA (*in holiday attire, flushed with drinking*). How jolly it 's been, matushka! — so fine and honorable! And how contented the people are! .... Where is he?

MATRIONA. Here, little berry, here! He 's lying on the straw, and won't get up! He won't come.

NIKITA (*glances at his wife*). Ish! she 's drunk, too. When I see her it makes me sick. How can I live with her? (*Turns over on his belly again.*) I 'll kill her sometime. It 'll be worse!

ANISYA. So here you are, perched in the straw. Have you been taking too much? (*Laughs.*) I would lie down with you, but I have no time. Let us come; I 'll lead the way. And how nice it is in the house! Charming to look at! And the harmonica! The women are singing! How lovely! All are tipsy: it 's a creditable affair! So nice!

NIKITA. What is nice?

ANISYA. The wedding; a jolly wedding. All the people say such a wedding does n't happen every day. It 's all so fine and honorable. Come now. Let us go together. .... I 've been drinking, but I can lead the way. (*Takes him by the hand.*)

NIKITA (*snatches his hand away in disgust*). Go by yourself. I 'll come.

ANISYA. What makes you so cross? All our troubles are past. We 've got rid of the impediment. We can live now. All we 've got to do is to rejoice. Everything is so honorably arranged — according to law. I 'm so glad, I can't begin to tell it. It 's just as if I were marrying you again. I-i! How satisfied the people are!

All are giving their congratulations. And such fine guests we have. Even Ivan Moseyitsh and the Uryadnik. They 've sung their glory, too.

NIKITA. Well, go and sit with them! What made you leave them?

ANISYA. There! you must come! It is not proper for the host and hostess to go away and leave their guests, and the guests all such fine ones.

NIKITA (*gets up and brushes off the straw*). You go. I 'll follow immediately.

MATRIONA. The night cuckoo cuckooed louder than the day cuckoo! He would not listen to me; but he instantly follows his wife. (MATRIONA *and* ANISYA *start to go.*) Will you come?

NIKITA. I 'll come immediately. You go, and I 'll follow. I 'll come and give the blessing.... (*The women hesitate.*) Go, and I 'll follow. Go, I say! (*The women leave him*; NIKITA *watches them in thoughtful mood.*)

SCENE X

NIKITA *alone; then* MITRITCH

NIKITA (*sits and takes off his shoes and stockings*). So I 'm expected to go! How could I? No, if you hunt you 'll find me on the beam perhaps. I unslipped the noose, jumped from the beam, and thus you 'll find me! And here are some reins, fortunately. (*Ponders.*) I could banish any kind of sorrow; I could banish it. But this of mine, it is heavy in my heart; I can 't get rid of it. (*He looks toward the dvor.*) There is n't any one coming again. (*Mimicking* ANISYA.) "How nice, and how nice! I would lie down with you!" Uh! the ugly old hag! Curse you! You can throw your arms around me when they take me down from the beam. There can be but one end![2] (*Takes hold of the rope and pulls at it.*)

MITRITCH (*tipsy; gets up and clings to the rope*). I

[1] Russian, *Odin konets*, "one end."

won't let go. I won't give it up to any one. I'll carry it myself. Mikita.... is it you? (*Laughs.*) Oh, the devil![1] are you after straw?

NIKITA. Give me the rope.

MITRITCH. No, you wait. The muzhiks sent me. I'll carry it. .... (*Staggers to his feet, begins to gather up straw, but totters; tries to save himself, and finally falls.*) *She's*[2] got the upper hand! *she's* won the day!....

NIKITA. Give me the reins.

MITRITCH. I told you, I would n't give it. Akh! Mikishka, you're stupid, like a fat pig. (*Laughs.*) I like you, but you're stupid! You look at me as if I was drunk. The devil take you, as far as I'm concerned. You think I need you. .... Look at me, will you! I'm a non-commissioned officer:[3] fool! you can't say 'Under-officer of the first regiment of his Majesty's grenadiers.' I have served the Tsar and my fatherland faithfully and well. But who am I? Do you think I'm a soldier? No! I'm not a soldier! I'm the very last man. I'm an orphan, I'm a waif! I swore off from drinking, and now I've begun again. .... Say, do you think I'm afraid of you? Why should I be? I'm not afraid of any one. .... When it comes to drinking, I'll drink! Now for two weeks I'll just spree it; I'll be drunk every day. I'll drink up everything down to my baptismal cross; I'll drink up my hat, I'll pawn my billet, and I'm not afraid of any one. They flogged me in the regiment to keep me from drinking. They thrashed and they lashed. "Will you stop it?" said they. "No, I won't," said I. Why should I be afraid of them? That's the kind of man I am.[4] A man is as God made him. I swore off from drinking. I did not drink. Now I've been drinking again, and I'm going to drink. And I'm not afraid of any one. For I don't lie, I tell the truth. .... Why should I fear them, — so much muck! That's the kind of man I am, I tell you. A priest once told me: "The devil himself is a braggart. As soon as you begin to

[1] *Akh, chort.*
[2] *Eya,* "She," the *vodva!*
[3] *Ya unter; unter* for *unter-ofitser.*
[4] *Vot on ya,* literally "here he I."

boast," says he, "that shows you're a coward." As soon as you are timid before folks, then he, the devil, comes and carries you off and keeps you where he wants you. And so I'm not timid at all before folks; it's easy for me. I sneeze in the devil's beard and his fire shovel, and his mother, the pig. He won't do anything to me.

NIKITA (*crosses himself*). What am I in fact? (*Throws down the rope.*)

MITRITCH. What?

NIKITA (*gets up*). Didn't you tell me not to be afraid of folks.

MITRITCH. What's there to be afraid of; the muck? Look at them in the bath, all of one clay. One has a stouter belly, another's thinner; that's the only difference among them. Away with them! What's there to be afraid of?.... May their mouths be stuffed with pie and peas!

SCENE XI

NIKITA, MITRITCH, *and* MATRIONA

MATRIONA (*comes from the dvor and calls*). Well, are you coming?

NIKITA. Okh! Yes, I suppose it's better. I'm coming. (*Goes toward the dvor.*)

CURTAIN

Change of stage. The Izba of Act I. filled with people, sitting at table and standing about. In the front room AKULINA *and the groom. On the table ikons and bread. Among the guests* MARINA, *her husband, and the uryadnik. The women are singing songs.* ANISYA *is passing liquor. The songs cease.*

[In the original this is called Stsena II. It might be called TABLEAU II]

SCENE I

ANISYA, MARINA, MARINA'S HUSBAND, AKULINA, THE BRIDEGROOM, *an* IZVOSHCHIK, THE MATCHMAKER, THE BEST MAN, MATRIONA, Guests, *and* People.

IZVOSHCHIK. It 's time to start; the church is not very near.

THE BEST MAN. Oh, just wait! the stepfather is going to give his blessing. But where is he?

ANISYA. He 's coming; he 'll be here directly, my dear friends. Have a little more to drink; don't be afraid.

THE MATCHMAKER. Why is he so long? What a time we 've been waiting already!

ANISYA. He 's coming; he 'll be here directly. A girl with close-cropped hair would n't have time to braid her tresses before he gets here. Have some more wine, friends. (*Offers liquor.*) He 'll be here directly! Sing another song, my beauties, till he comes.

IZVOSHCHIK. They 've sung all their songs while waiting.

(*The women sing; in the middle of the song,* NIKITA *and* AKIM *enter.*)

SCENE II

The Same, NIKITA, *and* AKIM

NIKITA (*holds* AKIM *by the arm and pushes him in front of him*). Go on, batyushka; it can't be done without you.

AKIM. I don't like it .... that is .... of course ....

NIKITA (*to the women*). Hush! cease your singing. (*Looks round at all in the izba.*) Marina, are you here?

THE MATCHMAKER. Come, get the image, and give the blessing.

NIKITA. Wait! give me time. (*Looks around.*) Akulina, are you here?

THE MATCHMAKER. What are you singling out people like that for? Where else should she be? What makes him act so strangely?....

ANISYA. Ye saints! why has he taken off his boots?

NIKITA. Batyushka! are you here? Look at me! Orthodox Commune, you are all here, and I am here. See what a kind of man I am! (*Falls on his knees.*)

ANISYA. Mikitushka, what's the matter with you? O my poor head![1]

THE MATCHMAKER. Here, now!

MATRIONA. I say! he's been drinking too much French wine. Come to your senses, do! (*She tries to get him to his feet; he pays no attention to any one, but looks straight ahead.*)

NIKITA. Orthodox Mir! I am a guilty man. I want to confess!

MATRIONA (*pulls him by the shoulder*). What is the matter with you? are you out of your senses? He has gone crazy, dears; we must take him away!

NIKITA (*frees his shoulder from her hand*). Let me be! And do you listen to me, batyushka! First thing! Marina, look here (*prostrates himself at her feet and then gets up*), I am guilty toward you; I vowed to marry you. I seduced you, I broke my word, I abandoned you; forgive me, for Christ's sake. (*Again he prostrates himself at her feet.*)

ANISYA. What nonsense are you giving us? This is not to the point at all. No one asked you anything. Get up. Why are you so impudent?

MATRIONA. O-okh! an evil spell has brought this on him. What has done this? He is bewitched! Get up! What empty nonsense you talk! (*Pulls him.*)

NIKITA (*shakes his head*). Don't touch me! Forgive

[1] *O golovushka moya; golovushka* is the diminutive of *golova*.

me, Marina. I have sinned toward you; forgive me, for Christ's sake!

(MARINA *covers her face with her hands and says nothing.*)

ANISYA. Get up, I say. Why are you so impudent? Come to your senses! Stop making a fool of yourself. It's shameful! oh, my poor head. Oh, he's gone perfectly crazy!

NIKITA (*pushes aside his wife and turns to* AKULINA). Akulina, now I have something to say to you. Listen to me, orthodox Mir! I am cursed! Akulina, I am guilty toward you. Your father did not die a natural death. He was poisoned!

ANISYA (*screams*). My poor head! What is the matter with him?

MATRIONA. The man is beside himself. Take him away. (*The people approach to lead him away.*)

AKIM (*opens out his arms*). Wait! you boys, just wait, don't you know ....

NIKITA. Akulina, I poisoned him. Forgive me, for Christ's sake.

AKULINA (*jumps up*). He lies! I know who it was!

THE MATCHMAKER. What's the matter with you?[1] Sit down!

AKIM. O Lord! what a sin! what a sin!

URYADNIK. Guard him! And send for the Starosta and the assistants. We must draw up the indictment. You get up and come here.

AKIM (*to the* URYADNIK). Say, you, bright buttons, don't you know, you just wait. Let him say what he's got to say, don't you know.

THE URYADNIK (*to* AKIM). Look here, old man, don't you interfere. I must draw up the paper.

AKIM. What kind of a man are you! Wait, I tell you. Don't talk about a paper now, don't you know. This affair here's in God's hands — the man, don't you see, is confessing his sins — and talk about an indictment! ....

[1] *Chto tui*, "What, thou?"

THE URYADNIK. Send for the Starosta.

AKIM. Let God's work go on! When that's done, don't you know, you may do yours, of course.

NIKITA. Akulina, my sin toward you is great. I seduced you; forgive me, for Christ's sake! (*Prostrates himself at her feet.*)

AKULINA (*comes out from behind the table*). Let me be, I will not be married. He ordered me to, but now I will not.

URYADNIK. Repeat what you said.

NIKITA. Wait, Mr. Uryadnik; let me speak to the end.

AKIM (*in rapture*). Speak, my dear child, tell it all — it will be easier. Confess to God; don't be afraid of men. God — God, He is here! ....

NIKITA. I poisoned the father, dog that I was; I ruined the daughter, she was in my power; and I destroyed the baby.

AKULINA. That's the truth, the truth!

NIKITA. I killed the little baby under a board in the cellar. I sat on it. .... I killed it. .... And its little bones cracked under it! (*Sobs.*) And I buried it in the ground. I did it — I alone!

AKULINA. He lies! I told him to ....

NIKITA. Don't shield me! I 'm not afraid of any one now. Forgive me, orthodox Mir! (*Prostrates himself on the ground.*)

(*Silence*)

THE URYADNIK. Bind him; your wedding, of course, is declared off. (*The men approach with their girdles.*)

NIKITA. Wait, you 'll have time enough. .... (*He prostrates himself at his father's feet.*) My dear father,[1] forgive your abandoned son. You warned me at the very beginning. When I first began this wicked life, you told me, — "If but one claw is caught the whole bird is lost." But I did not heed your words, dog that I was, and it has turned out as you said it would. Forgive me, for Christ's sake!

[1] *Batyushka rodimui.*

AKIM (*in rapture*). God will forgive! my dear child. (*Embraces him.*) You have not spared yourself. He will have mercy on you. God — God, He is here!

SCENE III

The Same, and THE STAROSTA

THE STAROSTA (*enters*). There are many witnesses here.

THE URYADNIK. We will take the depositions immediately. (*They bind* NIKITA.)

AKULINA (*approaches and stands next him*). I will tell the truth. Ask me also!

NIKITA (*bound*). It 's of no use questioning the witnesses. I did it all myself. It was my idea, and my own act. Take me where you please. I will say nothing more.

CURTAIN

THE FRUITS OF ENLIGHTENMENT

A COMEDY IN FOUR ACTS

(1889)

PERSONAGES

Leonid Feodorovitch Zvvezdintsef[1]: A retired lieutenant of horse-guards, the possessor of twenty-four thousand desyatins of land in various governments; a ruddy man of about sixty, an easy-going, agreeable gentleman. Believes in spiritism, and likes to surprise others with his tales.

Anna Pavlovna Zvvezdintseva: His wife, a stout, youngish woman, absorbed in social functions, despising her husband and blindly believing her doctor; an irritable woman.

Betsy: Their daughter, a society girl of twenty, with free and easy manners, affectedly masculine; she wears a pince-nez. Coquettish and fond of laughing. Speaks very rapidly, and very precisely, compressing her lips like a foreigner.

Vasili Leoniduitch: Their son, twenty-five years old, a candidate in legal studies; without definite occupation; a member of a bicycle club, of a horse-racing club, and a club for breeding greyhounds. A young man, enjoying excellent health and unbounded self-confidence. Talks loudly and abruptly. Sometimes he is very serious, almost glum; then again boisterously gay and laughs noisily.

Professor Alekseï Vladimirovitch Krugosvetlof: A scientific gentleman of fifty, with calm, agreeable, self-confident manners, and a drawling, singsong way of speaking. A great talker. Those that do not agree with him he treats with gentle scorn. He smokes continually. A thin, lively man.

The Doctor: Forty years old; healthy, stout, ruddy man; loud-voiced and bluff. He keeps up a self-satisfied smile.

Marya Konstantinovna: A young lady of twenty, a pupil at the Conservatory, a music-teacher with bangs on her forehead, in an exaggeratedly stylish toilet; very ingratiating; blushes easily.

[1] *Zvyezdina*, the *star* on a horse's forehead, from *zvyez*, a star.

PETRISHCHEF: Twenty-eight years old; a candidate in philological studies seeking for a position; a member of the same societies as VASILI LEONIDUITCH, and also of a Society for the Arrangement of Print and Calico Balls. Bald, quick in his movements and speech, and very courteous.

THE BARONESS: A woman of importance; fifty years old; stolid, speaks without intonations.

THE PRINCESS: A society lady; a visitor.

THE YOUNG PRINCESS: a society girl; she grimaces; a visitor.

THE COUNTESS: A country lady, who moves with great difficulty; she has false teeth and curls.

GROSSMANN: A dark-complexioned man, of Jewish type; very lively and nervous; speaks very loud.

MARYA VASILYEVNA TOLBUKHINA: A stout lady; very distinguished, rich, and good-natured; acquainted with all the celebrities of the past and present. Very stout; speaks rapidly, trying to out-talk the others. She smokes.

BARON KLINGEL (Kokò): A candidate of Petersburg University; a Kammer-yunker, attached to the embassy; perfectly correct and therefore tranquil in mind and quietly gay.

A LADY.

A BARUINYA (who does not speak).

SAKHATOF, SERGYEÏ IVANOVITCH: Fifty years old; a former member of the ministry; an elegant gentleman of broad European culture, without occupation and interested in everything. Holds himself with dignity and even with some reserve.

FEODOR IVANUITCH: A chamberlain, about sixty; a cultivated man loving culture, making excessive use of eye-glasses and handkerchief, which he slowly unfolds. Follows politics. An intellectual and excellent man.

GRIGORI: A lackey, twenty-eight years old; a handsome fellow, dissolute, spiteful, and audacious.

YAKOF: The butler, forty years old; bustling, good-natured, living only in the interest of country families.

SEMYON: Butler's assistant, twenty years old; a healthy, fresh, country lad, light-complexioned; without a beard as yet, calm and smiling.

COACHMAN: Thirty-five years old, with mustache only; gruff and decided.

THE OLD COOK: Forty-five years old; ragged, unshaven, bloated, sallow, trembly; dressed in a torn nankeen summer paletot and dirty trousers, in worn boots. His words are spoken as if he had an impediment in his speech.

THE COOK: A chatterer; discontented, thirty years old.

THE SWISS: A retired soldier.

TANYA: The chambermaid, nineteen years old; an energetic, strong, jolly girl of changeable moods. In moments of strong emotion she squeals with delight.

FIRST MUZHIK: Sixty years old; has acted as *starshina* or headman; supposes that he understands intercourse with gentlemen, and loves to hear himself.

SECOND MUZHIK: Forty-five years old; master of his own house, gruff and outspoken; does not like to speak. SEMYON's father.

THIRD MUZHIK: Seventy years old, in *lapti* or bark shoes; nervous, restless, quick in his motions; shy, but hides his shyness by talking.
THE FIRST FOOTMAN TO THE COUNTESS: An old man of the old régime, pride characteristic of a lackey.
THE SECOND FOOTMAN: Huge, healthy, rude.
ERRAND-BOY: From a shop; wears a blue *poddyovka*, or sleeveless jacket; has a clean, ruddy face. Speaks distinctly, suggestively, and clearly.

[*The action takes place at the Capitol in the house of the* ZVYEZDINTSEFS.]

ACT I

The theater represents the anteroom of a rich house in Moscow. Three doors; the outside door, the one leading into LEONID FEODOROVITCH'S *private room, and the one leading into* VASILI LEONIDUITCH'S *room. A staircase leading up to the interior chambers; behind it an entrance to the butler's pantry.*

SCENE I

GRIGORI (*a young and handsome lackey, looks at himself in the mirror and prinks*)

GRIGORI. Too bad about my mustaches! "Mustaches," says she, "are not suitable for a lackey." Why not, pray? So that it may be evident that you are a lackey! Otherwise how would one fail to excel her favorite son! What's he? Even without mustaches one could get ahead of him. .... (*Looks at himself with a smile.*) And how many of them have run after me! But no one here pleases me like this Tanya here! .... A simple chambermaid. That's true, but she's nicer than the young lady (*smiles*), and she's pretty. (*Listens.*) Here she comes. (*Smiles.*) Just hear how she taps with her little heels. .... v-va!

Scene II

GRIGORI *and* TANYA (*with a fur cloak and shoes*)

GRIGORI. My respects to Tatyana Makarovna!

TANYA. Tell me, are you always looking at yourself? Do you imagine you 're very handsome?

GRIGORI. Well, am I not good-looking?

TANYA. So-so .... neither good-looking nor ill-looking, but betwixt and between. But why are all these shubas hanging up here?

GRIGORI. I shall immediately remove them, young lady. (*He takes a shuba and wraps it round* TANYA, *at the same time hugging her.*) Tanya, what shall I say to you? ....

TANYA. Get away! What do you mean by such conduct? (*Angrily tears herself out of his arms.*) I say .... let me be!

GRIGORI (*glancing round*). Give me a kiss!

TANYA. What are you thinking about? I 'll kiss you this way! .... (*Threatens him with her hand.*)

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. (*A bell is heard behind the scenes, and then a voice.*) Grigori!

TANYA. There, go! Vasili Leoniduitch is calling.

GRIGORI. Let him wait! He 's only just opened his eyes. Listen, now! why don't you love me?

TANYA. Great notion you have of loving. I don't love any one.

GRIGORI. That 's not true! You love Siomka! You've found a fine kind of fellow — a butler's muzhik, a regular clown!

TANYA. Well, whatever he is, you 're jealous of him.

VASILI LEONIDUITCH (*behind the scenes*). Grigori!!

GRIGORI. You 're in a hurry! .... There 's something to be jealous about! Here you are beginning to grow cultivated and you take up with such a fellow! It would be different if you were in love with me. .... Tanya! ....

TANYA (*angrily and severely*). I tell you it 's none of your business.

VASILI LEONIDUITCH (*behind the scenes*). Grigori!!!

GRIGORI. You treat me very severely.

VASILI LEONIDUITCH (*behind the scenes; calls persistently, monotonously, at the top of his voice*). Grigori! Grigori! Grigori!

(TANYA *and* GRIGORI *laugh.*)

GRIGORI. Such nice girls have been in love with me! (*Bell.*)

TANYA. Well, go to him, and let me be!

GRIGORI. You are dull, I see. Why, I 'm not Semyon!

TANYA. Semyon wants to marry and does n't care for nonsense.

SCENE III

GRIGORI, TANYA, *and* ERRAND-BOY

ERRAND-BOY (*brings a great pasteboard box with a gown*). Good-morning.

GRIGORI. How are you? Who from?

ERRAND-BOY. From Bourdier, a gown, and here 's a note for the lady.

TANYA (*takes the note*). Sit down; I will deliver it. (*Exit.*)

SCENE IV

GRIGORI, *the* ERRAND-BOY, *and* VASILI LEONIDUITCH

VASILI LEONIDUITCH (*puts his head out of the door; he is in shirt-sleeves and slippers*). Grigori.

GRIGORI. Presently.

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. Grigori! Can't you hear?

GRIGORI. I 've only just come.

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. Warm water and tea.

GRIGORI. Semyon will bring them immediately.

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. What is that? From Bourdier?

ERRAND-BOY. That 's just what it is!

(VASILI LEONIDUITCH *and* GRIGORI *exeunt. Bell.*)

Scene V

ERRAND-BOY *and* TANYA

TANYA (*runs to answer the bell and opens the door; To the* ERRAND-BOY). Wait!

ERRAND-BOY. That 's just what I 'm doing.

Scene VI

ERRAND-BOY, TANYA, *and* SAKHATOF (*who enters*)

TANYA. Excuse me, the lackey just went out. If you please, permit me. (*Takes his shuba.*)

SAKHATOF (*adjusting his dress*). Is Leonid Feodorovitch at home? Is he up? (*Bell.*)

TANYA. Certainly, long ago!

Scene VII

ERRAND-BOY, TANYA, *and* SAKHATOF. *The* DOCTOR *enters. Looks round for the lackey. Sees* SAKHATOF

DOCTOR (*deferentially*). Ah! my respects to you!

SAKHATOF (*gazes fixedly*). The doctor, I believe?

DOCTOR. I thought you were abroad. Have you come to see Leonid Feodorovitch?

SAKHATOF. Yes! And what brings you? Any one sick?

DOCTOR (*smiling*). Not exactly sick, but you know .... with these fine ladies there 's always trouble. She sits up over her whist every night till three o'clock, and takes an occasional glass. Then she 's fat and stout, and she 's pretty well along in years.

SAKHATOF. Do you give Anna Pavlovna the benefit of your diagnosis this way? She would n't be pleased, I imagine.

DOCTOR (*smiling*). Well, I 'm right. They all keep up these tricks, and then comes lesion of the digestive organs, pressure on the liver, ... nervous. .... Well, then

she writes for you and you have to prescribe. Too bad about them. (*Smiles.*) But how are you? So you are also a spiritualist, are you?

SAKHATOF. I? No, I 'm not a spiritualist, also! .... Well, my respects to you. (*Starts to go, but the* DOCTOR *detains him.*)

DOCTOR. No, I don't entirely deny it when such a man as Krugosvetlof takes stock in it. It 's impossible .... a professor, of European celebrity! There must be something in it. I should like to see something, but I never have the chance; I have other fish to fry.

SAKHATOF. Yes, yes. My respects to you.

(*Exit with a slight bow.*)

DOCTOR (*to* TANYA). Is she up yet?

TANYA. She 's in her bedroom. Will you go in?

(SAKHATOF *and the* DOCTOR *go out by different doors.*)

SCENE VIII

ERRAND-BOY, TANYA, *and* FEODOR IVANUITCH

FEODOR IVANUITCH (*enters with a newspaper in his hands; to the* ERRAND-BOY). What do you want?

ERRAND-BOY. I 'm from Bourdier with a gown and a note. I was told to wait.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Oh, from Bourdier. (*To* TANYA.) Who was it came?

TANYA. Sakhatof Sergyeï Ivanuitch and the doctor. They stopped here and talked a little while about spiritichism.

FEODOR IVANUITCH (*correcting her*). About spiritualism.

TANYA. Yes, that 's what I said; about spiritichism. And did you hear, Feodor Ivanuitch, how well it went last time? (*Laughs.*) There were raps and things flew around.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. And how did you know?

TANYA. Well, Lizavieta Leonidovna said so.

Scene IX

TANYA, FEODOR IVANUITCH, *the* ERRAND-BOY, *and* YAKOF *the butler*

YAKOF (*comes running in with a glass of tea; to the* ERRAND-BOY). How are you?

ERRAND-BOY (*gloomily*). How are you?

(YAKOF *knocks at* VASILI LEONIDUITCH'S *door.*)

Scene X

The Same, and GRIGORI

GRIGORI. Give it here.

YAKOF. Yesterday's glasses have not yet been returned or the tray from Vasili Leoniduitch. I have been asked for them.

GRIGORI. The tray is in his room with cigarettes.

YAKOF. Then put them somewhere else. You see they ask me for it.

GRIGORI. I 'll bring it. I 'll bring it.

YAKOF. You say you 'll bring it, but it does n't come. The other day they were wanting it, but it was nowhere to be found.

GRIGORI. I 'll bring it, I tell you. What a fuss!

YAKOF. It 's well for you to say so; but here for two whole days with me, it 's "serve tea" and "get breakfast ready." You 're kept on the jump, on the jump, all the day's day. Who in the house has more to do than I have? And always in the wrong!

GRIGORI. Who has better work? .... How fine you are!

TANYA. To you all are in the wrong except yourself. ....

GRIGORI (*to* TANYA). No one asked you! (*Exit.*)

Scene XI

Tanya, Yakof, Feodor Ivanuitch *and the* Errand-boy

Yakof. Well, I 'm not offended. .... Tatyana Makarovna, did n't the baruinya say something about last evening's performance?

Tanya. That about the lamp, you mean?

Yakof. And how it was torn out of my hands, only God knows! I had just started to wipe it, had scarcely taken it up, when somehow it slipped out .... in little bits of pieces! Just my bad luck! It 's all right for him, for Grigori Mikhaïluitch, to talk, since he 's a single man; but when one has a family .... one must think about things and furnish provisions. But I don't look at the work. So she did n't say a word? Well, glory to God for that! .... How many spoons have you, Feodor Ivanuitch — one or two?

Feodor Ivanuitch. One, one! (*Reads the paper.*)

(*Exit* Yakof.)

Scene XII

Tanya, Feodor Ivanuitch, *and the* Errand-boy

(*A bell is heard. Enter* Grigori *with a tray and the* Swiss.)

The Swiss (*to* Grigori). Announce to the barin[1] some peasants from the country.

Grigori (*points to* Feodor Ivanuitch). Give your errand to the steward; I have no time. (*Exit.*)

[1] Barin means nobleman and gentleman; *baruinya* is the corresponding term for a married lady; *baruishnya* for an unmarried lady; a *barsky dvor* is any seigniorial residence. — Ed.

Scene XIII

Tanya, Feodor Ivanuitch, *the* Swiss, *and the* Errand-boy

Tanya. Where are the muzhiks from?

The Swiss. From Kursk, I think.

Tanya (*squeals*). They! oh, it must be Semyon's father about the land! I 'll go and meet them.

(*Exit, running.*)

Scene XIV

Feodor Ivanuitch, *the* Swiss, *and the* Errand-boy

The Swiss. Tell me; shall I admit them, or what? They say they 've come about the land, the barin knows.

Feodor Ivanuitch. Yes, about buying some land. Yes, yes. He has company just now. This is what you must do; tell them to wait.

The Swiss. Where shall they wait?

Feodor Ivanuitch. Let them wait in the courtyard; I will send for them. (*Exit* Swiss.)

Scene XV

Feodor Ivanuitch, Tanya, *behind her* Three Muzhiks, Grigori, *and the* Errand-boy

Tanya. To the right. This way, this way!

Feodor Ivanuitch. I did not order them to be admitted here.

Grigori. She 's flighty!

Tanya. No matter, Feodor Ivanuitch, they 'll wait here with their crust.

Feodor Ivanuitch. Their feet will soil the floor.[1]

Tanya. They have wiped their feet, and I 'll brush up after them. (*To the muzhiks.*) You stand here.

[1] All expressed in one word in Russian, *natapchut.*

(*The muzhiks enter, carrying presents in their handkerchiefs, Easter cakes, eggs, towels. They look for the ikons, to cross themselves. They cross themselves toward the stairs, bow low before* FEODOR IVANUITCH, *and range themselves stiffly.*)

GRIGORI (*to* FEODOR IVANUITCH). Feodor Ivanuitch, they say that Pironnet is the only shoemaker who can make gaiters; but what could be better than what that man's got on! (*Points to the* THIRD MUZHIK, *who wears felt chungi.*)

FEODOR IVANUITCH. All you can do is to be always laughing at people! (*Exit* GRIGORI.)

SCENE XVI

TANYA, FEODOR IVANUITCH, *and the* THREE MUZHIKS

FEODOR IVANUITCH (*gets up and goes to the muzhiks*). So you are from Kursk, are you, and come to see about the buying of the land?

FIRST MUZHIK. That's right. We came, for instance, to finish up about the sale of it. How, could we be announced?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Yes, yes. I know, I know. You wait here; I will announce you immediately. (*Exit.*)

SCENE XVII

TANYA *and the* THREE MUZHIKS. VASILI LEONIDUITCH *behind the scenes*

(*The muzhiks look round and know not what to do with their gifts.*)

FIRST MUZHIK. What is the thing — I mean what do you call what you hand things on? Something to make a thing look like something. What is it? a platter?

TANYA. Wait a minute, wait a minute! Give them

to me; for the time being let them lie here. (*Lays them on the settee.*)

FIRST MUZHIK. What do you call that man, for instance, who just came up to us?

TANYA. That, the Kammerdien.

FIRST MUZHIK. That's simple — Kamardin. Of course he looks after things..... (*To* TANYA.) And you, for example, what do you have to do here?

TANYA. I'm one of the chambermaids. I'm also from Demen. You see I know you, and I know you, too; but that old uncle I don't know. (*Points to the* THIRD MUZHIK.)

THIRD MUZHIK. You know their names, but you don't know mine?

TANYA. You are Yefim Antonuitch.

FIRST MUZHIK. Reely![1]

TANYA. And you are Semyon's father, Zakhar Trifonuitch.

SECOND MUZHIK. Truly.

THIRD MUZHIK. And I, we will say, am Mitri Chilikin. Will you know now?

TANYA. Now we shall be able to call you by name.

SECOND MUZHIK. And whose daughter may you be?

TANYA. I'm Aksinya's daughter; my father was a soldier, but he's dead.

FIRST MUZHIK } (*in surprise*). Indeed!
THIRD MUZHIK }

SECOND MUZHIK. There's some reason in the saying:—

"Pay a groat
For a shoat,
Feed it high
On the rye,
And then 't will swell
Very well!"

FIRST MUZHIK. Reely! Just exactly like a mamsell!

THIRD MUZHIK. O Lord! what a queer world!

VASILI LEONIDUITCH (*behind the scene, rings and then calls*). Grigori! Grigori!

[1] He says *dvistitel'no* for *dyeïstvitel'no.*

First Muzhik. Who is it making such a fuss in there, for example?

Tanya. That's the young barin.

Third Muzhik. O Lord! I said we'd better wait outside.

(*Silence.*)

Second Muzhik. Is it you Semyon wants to marry?

Tanya. So he wrote, did he? (*Covers her face with her apron.*)

Second Muzhik. Of course he wrote. What a crazy notion he's got! I see the lad has been getting spoiled.

Tanya (*with spirit*). No! He hasn't been getting spoiled at all. Shall I send him to you?

Second Muzhik. Why send him? There's plenty of time; we shan't hurry.

Vasili Leoniduitch (*is heard crying in despair*). Grigori! The devil take you!

Scene XVIII

The Same, and Vasili Leoniduitch (*at the door in his shirt-sleeves and putting on his pince-nez*)

Vasili Leoniduitch. Are you all dead?

Tanya. He's not here, Vasili Leoniduitch. .... I'll send him immediately. (*Goes toward the door.*)

Vasili Leoniduitch. I heard some one talking! What sort of scarecrows are these? What?

Tanya. These are muzhiks from the Kursk village, Vasili Leoniduitch.

Vasili Leoniduitch (*looking at the errand-boy*). And who's this? Oh, yes, the Errand-boy from Bourdier.

(*The peasants bow low.* Vasili Leoniduitch *pays no attention to them.* Grigori *meets* Tanya *at the door.* Tanya *pauses.*)

Scene XIX

The Same, and Grigori

Vasili Leoniduitch. I told you .... the other shoes! I can't wear these.

Grigori. But the others are right there.

Vasili Leoniduitch. Where are they?

Grigori. Why, there.

Vasili Leoniduitch. You lie!

Grigori. Come! you 'll see.

(Vasili Leoniduitch *and* Grigori *exeunt.*)

Scene XX

Tanya, *the* Three Muzhiks, *and the* Errand-boy

Third Muzhik. I say, maybe now ain't the right time; perhaps we 'd better go to our lodgings[1] and wait there till it 's time.

Tanya. No, it 's all right; you wait. Here, I 'll bring you a plate for your presents. (*Exit.*)

Scene XXI

The Same, Sakhatof, Leonid Feodorovitch, *and behind them* Feodor Ivanuitch

(*The muzhiks bring their presents and take their positions.*)

Leonid Feodorovitch (*to the muzhiks*). Presently, presently, just wait. (*Indicating the errand-boy.*) Who is this?

The Errand-boy. From Bourdier.

Leonid Feodorovitch. Oh, from Bourdier!

Sakhatof (*smiling*). Oh, I don't deny it; but you 'll

[1] *Fatera,* colloquial, quarters.

agree that those of us, the unenlightened, who don't witness all these things you tell about, find it hard to believe them.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. You say, "I can't believe." But we don't demand belief. We demand examination. Why! I can't help believing in this ring. This ring was brought to me *from there!*

SAKHATOF. What do you mean "from there"? From where?

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. From the other world! Yes.

SAKHATOF (*smiling*). Very interesting, very interesting.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. But let us suppose you think that I'm a man carried away by enthusiasms, who imagines to himself what does not exist; but here's Alekseï Vladimirovitch Krugosvetlof, he's certainly no ordinary person, but a professor, and he recognizes it. Nor is he the only one. There's Crookes. There's Wallace.

SAKHATOF. But you see I don't deny it. I only say it's very interesting. Interesting to know how Krugosvetlof explains it.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. He has his theory. But you just come this evening. He will undoubtedly be there. But chiefly Grossmann will be there. .... You know the celebrated mind-reader.

SAKHATOF. Yes, I have heard about it, but have n't yet had a chance to see it.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Well, do come. First Grossmann, and then Kapchitch, and our mediumistic séance .... (*to* FEODOR IVANUITCH) Has n't the messenger from Kapchitch come back yet?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Not yet.

SAKHATOF. How should I know, then?

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Come anyway, it does n't make any difference .... Come! If Kapchitch is n't there, we'll find our medium. Marya Ignatyevna is the medium; not so strong as Kapchitch, but good enough.

Scene XXII

The Same, and Tanya *who enters with plates for the presents. She listens to the conversation*

Sakhatof (*smiles*). Yes, yes; but here's one circumstance; why are mediums always from the so-called cultivated circle? Both Kapchitch and Marya Ignatyevna. If this is a peculiar force, then surely we ought to find it among the people, among the muzhiks.

Leonid Feodorovitch. And so we do! It so often happens, that we have one muzhik and he has proved to be a medium. One day we called him during the time of a séance — a divan had to be moved — and we forgot all about him. He had apparently gone to sleep. And just imagine: our séance was at an end, Kapchitch had come out of his trance, and suddenly we noticed that at the other end of the room mediumistic phenomena were beginning to manifest themselves; the table moved and started to walk.

Tanya (*aside*). That was when I crept out from under the table.

Leonid Feodorovitch. Evidently he is also a medium — the more so that he looks very much like Home..... Do you remember Home?.... light-complexioned, naïve!

Sakhatof (*shrugging his shoulders*). Indeed. This is very interesting. So, then, you would experiment on him, I suppose.

Leonid Feodorovitch. And we shall. But he's not the only one. There are lots of mediums. Only we don't know them. Why, only the other day an old woman who was sick moved a stone wall.

Sakhatof. Moved a stone wall?

Leonid Feodorovitch. Yes, yes! She was lying in bed, and did not have the slightest idea that she was a medium. She leaned her hand on the wall and the wall moved.

Sakhatof. And it did not fall down?

Leonid Feodorovitch. No, it did not fall down.

SAKHATOF. Strange! .... Well, I 'll come this evening.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Come, do come! We 'll have the séance in any event.

(SAKHATOF *puts on his coat.* LEONID FEODOROVITCH *shows him out.*)

SCENE XXIII

The Same, without SAKHATOF

ERRAND-BOY (*to* TANYA). Do announce me to the baruinya! Do you expect me to spend the night here?

TANYA. Wait! She is going to drive with the young lady; they 'll be coming very soon now. (*Exit.*)

SCENE XXIV

The Same, without TANYA

LEONID FEODOROVITCH (*approaches the muzhiks, who bow and present their gifts*). That is not necessary.

FIRST MUZHIK (*smiling*). This comes as our first duty. It 's what the commune bade us do.

SECOND MUZHIK. This is the way it 's usually managed.

THIRD MUZHIK. Don't speak about it, because we 're very happy to do it. .... As our fathers, I say, served your fathers, so we wish, I say, with all our hearts, to do the same. .... (*Bows low.*)

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. But who are you? What is it exactly that you want?

FIRST MUZHIK. We have come to your grace, of course.

Scene XXV

The Same, and Petrishchef

Petrishchef (*comes in hastily, wearing a great-coat*). Is Vasili Leoniduitch awake yet? (*Seeing* Leonid Feodorovitch, *he nods to him.*)

Leonid Feodorovitch. Have you come to see my son?

Petrishchef. I — I want to see Vovò for a little minute.

Leonid Feodorovitch. Go in, go in!

(Petrishchef *takes off his cloak and quickly goes up.*)

Scene XXVI

The Same, without Petrishchef

Leonid Feodorovitch. Well, now what do you want?

Second Muzhik. Accept our presents.

First Muzhik (*smiling*). That is, the offering from the village.

Third Muzhik. And don't mention it: it 's no consequence. Our wishes to you as to our own father. And don't mention it.

Leonid Feodorovitch. Very good — Feodor, take them.

Feodor Ivanuitch. Well, give them here. (*Takes the presents.*)

Leonid Feodorovitch. Now what is the trouble?

First Muzhik. Well, we've come to your grace.

Leonid Feodorovitch. I see you have come to me; but what do you want.

First Muzhik. To take steps about completing the purchase of the land. It comes to this that....

Leonid Feodorovitch. Well, are you going to buy the land?

First Muzhik. Reely, this is the way of it. It comes to this that..... Of course we want to buy the land

for our own. So the mir empowered us, for example, to get it through the Imperial Bank, as is customary, by affixing a stamp of the prescribed amount.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. That is, you wish to buy some land by means of the bank — that 's it, is it ?

FIRST MUZHIK. That is as you proposed to us last summer. It comes to this, of course, that the whole sum complete amounts to 32,864 rubles to make the land ours.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. That 's right : but how about the payment ?

FIRST MUZHIK. Well, the mir proposes, as was said last summer, to pay by instalments, according to the law, and four thousand rubles down.

SECOND MUZHIK. You 'll receive four thousand in cash now, that is, and the rest you 'll wait for.

THIRD MUZHIK (*while he unrolls the money*). You need n't fear, we 'll pledge ourselves, and we won't do nothing. I should say we won't do something, that is, anything — in other words — we 'll do as we ought.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Well, you see, I wrote you that I would agree to it only on condition you put up all the money.

FIRST MUZHIK. That reely would be pleasanter, but you see it 's impossible.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. What 's to be done, then ?

FIRST MUZHIK. The mir, for example, expected to do as you proposed last summer in regard to postponing the payments. ....

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. That was last year. Then I agreed to it ; but now I can't. ....

SECOND MUZHIK. But how is that ? You assured us — we have prepared the document and got the money.

THIRD MUZHIK. Have pity on us, father. We have so little land — scarcely room to keep cattle, or even a hen. (*He bows.*) Don't be hard on us, father. (*He bows.*)

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. It is true, and I 'll admit it, that last year I agreed to wait, but now circumstances have changed .... So that now it is inconvenient for me.

SECOND MUZHIK. It is impossible for us to get along without this land.

FIRST MUZHIK. Reely, without land we can't live; we are ruined.

THIRD MUZHIK (*bows*). Father! We have so little land — really not enough for a cow, I say, or a hen. Father! show your kind heart! Take the money, father!

LEONID FEODOROVITCH (*who has meantime looked at the paper*). I understand. I should like to do you a favor. You wait. I will give an answer in half an hour .... Feodor, tell any one that I 'm not receiving.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Very well.

(*Exit* LEONID FEODOROVITCH.)

SCENE XXVII

The Same, without LEONID FEODOROVITCH. *The muzhiks show signs of depression*

SECOND MUZHIK. My! What a scrape! Give the whole, says he. But where shall we get it?

FIRST MUZHIK. If he hadn 't encouraged us last summer! And that 's the reason we reely supposed it would be as was said in the summer.

THIRD MUZHIK. O Lord! I was just taking out the money! (*Rolls up the bills again.*) Now what shall we do?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. What is your trouble?

FIRST MUZHIK. Our trouble, worthy sir, for instance, lies in this: He proposed last summer to let the payments hang over. The mir voted to empower us to act for it; but now, for instance, he proposes that we pay the whole sum at once. And we are unable to do that.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Much money?

FIRST MUZHIK. The whole sum to be paid in advance is four thousand rubles, of course.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Well, then! Strain every nerve and get some more.

First Muzhik. We have got it as well as we could. Sir, there 's no powder in these thoughts.

Second Muzhik. Where people have nothing you can't get it out of them, even by pulling their teeth!

Third Muzhik. We should like with all our hearts to do it, I can tell you; but even if we drove them with a broomstick we couldn 't get any more from them.

Scene XXVIII

The Same, Vasili Leoniduitch *and* Petrishchef (*at the door, both with cigarettes*)

Vasili Leoniduitch. There! I have already said — I will try. I will do the very best I can. Well, what?

Petrishchef. Understand that if you don't get it, the devil only knows how ill it will go with us!

Vasili Leoniduitch. But I have said I will try — and I will. Well, what?

Petrishchef. Nothing. I only say I must have it, anyway. I will wait. (*Exit, closing the door.*)

Scene XXIX

The Same, without Petrishchef

Vasili Leoniduitch (*waving his hand*). The Devil knows what it means. (*The muzhiks bow low.* Vasili Leoniduitch *looks at the* Errand-boy. *To* Feodor Ivanuitch.) Why have n't you sent away this fellow from Bourdier's? He seems to have come to live with us entirely. Look at that — he 's asleep. What do you say?

Feodor Ivanuitch. Well, they 've delivered the note..... They ordered him to wait till Anna Pavlovna should come.

Vasili Leoniduitch (*looks at the muzhiks and eyes the money greedily*). What is that — money? Whom is that for? Is that money for us? (*To* Feodor Ivanuitch) Who are these men?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. They are peasants from Kursk; they are buying land.

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. Tell me, is it sold?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Not yet; they have n't come to terms yet. They 're very close-fisted.

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. Ah?.... We must talk it over with them. (*To the muzhiks.*) Well, are you going to make your purchase? What?

FIRST MUZHIK. Reely, we propose to get the land as our possession.

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. Then don't be close-fisted, you know. I will tell you how necessary land is to a good muzhik. Say, it 's very necessary, is n't it?

FIRST MUZHIK. Reely, land is of prime importance; that is so.

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. Well, then, don't be close-fisted. Let us see — what land is it? Why, I tell you, you can sow winter-wheat on it in rows; you can get three hundred puds[1] from it; at a ruble a pud, that makes three hundred rubles. Well, now! Suppose you put in mint? I tell you, you can screw out of it a thousand rubles a desyatin!

FIRST MUZHIK. Reely, that 's a fact; any one who has the know-how can produce all sorts of products in reality.

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. Then don't fail to put in mint. You see, I know all about that. That is all printed in books. I will show you. What do you say?

FIRST MUZHIK. Reely, all that concerns that is plainer in books. Brains, of course.

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. So you 'd better buy it; don't be close-fisted, but hand over your money. (*To* FEODOR IVANUITCH.) Where is papa?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. At home. He asked not to be disturbed for a little.

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. Well, probably he is consulting the spirits as to whether he shall sell the land or not. Is that so?

[1] About half a long ton; a pud has 40 Russian, 36.11 avoirdupois, pounds. A desyatin is 2.7 acres.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. I can't say as to that. I know he was undecided.

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. What do you think, Feodor Ivanuitch? Has he any money? Tell me.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. That I don't know. I doubt it. Why do you ask? Did n't you win a tidy little sum at cards last week?

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. Well, I spent that for dogs. But now see here: our new society.... and Petrishchef has been elected.... and I borrowed some money of Petrishchef, and now I need some for him and for myself. How is it?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. What is this new society of yours? Bicycles?

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. No; I'll tell you by and by: it's a new society. I'll say this much, it's a very serious society. And do you know who is the president? What?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. What's the idea of the new club?

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. A Society for the Encouragement of the Breeding of the old Russian Poodle. What? And I will tell you: to-day is the first session and breakfast. But you see I have no money. I'll go to him and try it. (*Goes to the door.*)

SCENE XXX

The MUZHIKS, FEODOR IVANUITCH, *and the* ERRAND-BOY

FIRST MUZHIK. Who may that be, worthy sir?

FEODOR IVANUITCH (*smiling*). The young barin.

THIRD MUZHIK. The heir, I suppose. O Lord! (*He puts away the money.*) It's best to get in order while there's time.

FIRST MUZHIK. We've been told that he's in the army, a cavalry man for instance.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. No; he is an only son, and so he's free from military obligation.

THIRD MUZHIK. Left at home, I suppose, to support his parents. That is right.

SECOND MUZHIK (*nods his head*). This one must do it; there 's no doubt about it.

THIRD MUZHIK. O Lord!

SCENE XXXI

FEODOR IVANUITCH, *the* THREE MUZHIKS, VASILI LEONIDUITCH *and behind them at the door* LEONID FEODOROVITCH

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. That 's the way it always is. It 's truly remarkable. First you say to me, "Why have n't you some occupation?" and now when I have found something to do and an occupation, and a serious society has been established, with noble aims, then I 'm grudged a paltry three hundred rubles. ....

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. I have told you that I cannot — and I cannot! I have n't it.

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. But here you have been selling land.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. In the first place, I have n't sold it, and chief of all — leave me in peace! (*Slams the door.*)

SCENE XXXII

The Same, without LEONID FEODOROVITCH

FEODOR IVANUITCH. I told you that now was n't the time.

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. I tell you this is a pretty fix, what? I 'll go to mama — my one salvation. He 's stark staring mad with his spiritism, and forgets everything. (*Goes upstairs.*)

(FEODOR IVANUITCH *sits down and is just going to read his newspaper.*)

Scene XXXIII

The Same, Betsy *and* Marya Konstantinovna *come downstairs. Behind them* Grigori

Betsy. Is the carriage ready?

Grigori. It's coming.

Betsy (*to* Marya Konstantinovna). Let us go, let us go! I saw that it was he!

Marya Konstantinovna. Who is he?

Betsy. You know very well that it was Petrishchef.

Marya Konstantinovna. But where is he?

Betsy. He's with Vovò. You'll see.

Marya Konstantinovna. But it may be not he!

(*The* Muzhiks *and* Errand-boy *make low bows.*)

Betsy (*to the* Errand-boy). Well, are you from Bourdier's with the gown?

Errand-boy. I am that. Please let me be dismissed.

Betsy. I don't know anything about it; it's mama's affair.

Errand-boy. I can't tell who it's for. I was ordered to bring it to you and to get the money.

Betsy. Well then, wait.

Marya Konstantinovna. Is this the costume for the charade?

Betsy. Yes; a charming costume. But mama won't take it, and doesn't want to pay for it.

Marya Konstantinovna. Why not?

Betsy. Well, you must ask mama. For Vovò, it's not dear to pay five hundred rubles for a dog, but for a gown to cost one hundred rubles is dear. I can't look like a fright. (*Indicating the muzhiks.*) But who are these?

Grigori. Muzhiks, trying to buy some land.

Betsy. Oh, I thought they were huntsmen. Aren't you huntsmen?

First Muzhik. Not at all, lady. We have come to see Leonid Feodorovitch about completing the purchase of land.

BETSY. How is it? Some huntsmen were to come to Vovò. Are you sure you are not huntsmen? (*The Muzhiks are silent.*) How stupid they are! (*Goes to the door.*) Vovò! (*Laughs.*)

MARYA KONSTANTINOVNA. Why, then, we just met him.

BETSY. You 'd better be hunting for your tongues!.... Vovò, are you there?

SCENE XXXIV

The Same, and PETRISHCHEF

PETRISHCHEF. Vovò is not there, but I am ready to take his place and do everything required. How do you do? How are you, Marya Konstantinovna! (*Shakes* BETSY'S *hand long and vigorously; then* MARYA KONSTANTINOVNA'S.)

SECOND MUZHIK. Look! just as if he were pumping water.

BETSY. You can't take his place; still you 're better than nothing. (*Laughs.*) What business have you and Vovò on foot?

PETRISHCHEF. Business? Fie-nancial business: that is, our business is fie and at the same time nancial and moreover financial.

BETSY. What does "nancial" mean?

PETRISHCHEF. What a question. That 's where the joke lies: it does not mean anything.

BETSY. Then it missed fire, absolutely missed fire. (*Laughs.*)

PETRISHCHEF. It is impossible for every gun to go off. It 's a kind of an allegri.[1] Allegri, allegri, and then you may win.

(FEODOR IVANUITCH *goes into* LEONID FEODOROVITCH'S *private room.*)

[1] *Allegri*, a combination of masquerade and lottery; here "lottery," or perhaps "blank."

Scene XXXV

The Same, without Feodor Ivanuitch

Betsy. Well, that was a blank. But tell me, were you at the Mergasofs' yesterday?

Petrishchef. Not so much at *Mère Gassof's* as at *Père Gassof's*, and not at *Père Gassof's* but at *Fils Gassof's*.

Betsy. You can't get along without a *jeu de mots*. It 's a disease. Were the gipsies there also? (*Laughs derisively.*)

Petrishchef (*sings*): —

Na fartushki pyetushki
Zolatuiye grebeshki.

Betsy. Happy people. And we were bored at Fofo's.

Petrishchef (*continues to sing*): —

I bozhilas i klyalas
Pobuivat' ko mnye. ....

How does it go? What 's the rest of it, Marya Konstantinovna?

Marya Konstantinovna. *Ko mnye na chas.*[1]

Petrishchef. How is it? How is it, Marya Konstantinovna? (*Laughs.*)

Betsy. *Cessez! vous devenez impossible.*

Petrishchef. *J'ai cessé, j'ai bebé, j'ai dédé.*

Betsy. I see only one means of escaping your witticisms .... there 's no stopping you. Let us go to Vovò's room; besides, he has a guitar. Come, Marya Konstantinovna, come on!

(Betsy, Marya Konstantinovna, *and* Petrishchef *go into* Vasili Leoniduitch's *room.*)

[1] On her apron a cock with a golden comb, and she swore and vowed to spend an hour with me.

Scene XXXVI

GRIGORI, *the* THREE MUZHIKS *and the* ERRAND-BOY

FIRST MUZHIK. Whose folks are those?

GRIGORI. One 's the young lady; the other 's mamzel — she teaches music.

FIRST MUZHIK. That is, she makes a science of it, does she? And how neat she is! a regular picture.[1]

SECOND MUZHIK. Why don't she marry? She 's plenty old enough, I should think.

GRIGORI. Fifteen 's the right age, I suppose, as with you.

FIRST MUZHIK. And is that man, for instance, a musician?[2]

GRIGORI (*imitating him*). A musician! .... Can't you get anything through your head?

FIRST MUZHIK. Reely, that 's our stupidity — our lack of education.

THIRD MUZHIK. O Lord!

(*The sound of gipsy songs with guitar is heard in* VASILI LEONIDUITCH'S *room.*)

Scene XXXVII

GRIGORI, *the* THREE MUZHIKS, *the* ERRAND-BOY. *Enter* SEMYON, *followed by* TANYA. TANYA *watches the meeting between father and son*

GRIGORI (*to* SEMYON). What do you want?

SEMYON. I 've been on an errand to Mr. Kapchitch.

GRIGORI. Well, what of it?

SEMYON. In so many words he told me to say that he could not possibly be there to-night.

GRIGORI. Very well. I 'll deliver the message. (*Exit.*)

[1] *Patret* for *portret.*

[2] The peasant says *iz muzuikanshchikof* instead of *iz muzuikantof,* "one of the musicians."

Scene XXXVIII

The Same, without Grigori

Semyon (*to his father*). How are you, father? Here 's to you, Uncle Yefim — Uncle Mitri. All well at home?

Second Muzhik. How are you, Semyon?

First Muzhik. How are you, brother?

Third Muzhik. How are you, youngster? Are you all right?

Semyon (*smiling*). Tell me, batyushka, shall we go and drink a glass of tea?

Second Muzhik. Wait; let us get through our business first. Don't you see we have no time now?

Semyon. Well, all right. I 'll wait for you at the steps. (*He starts to go.*)

Tanya (*runs after him*). Did n't you say anything?

Semyon. How could I speak now before folks? Have patience; we 'll go and drink our tea, and then I 'll tell him. (*Exit.*)

Scene XXXIX

The Same, without Semyon. (Feodor Ivanuitch *comes out and sits at the window with his newspaper*)

First Muzhik. Well, will you tell us, worthy sir, how our business is getting along?

Feodor Ivanuitch. Wait a little, he 'll be out directly; he will soon be done.

Tanya (*to* Feodor Ivanuitch). But, Feodor Ivanuitch, how do you know that he will soon be done?

Feodor Ivanuitch. Well, I know; when he ends the questions, then he reads the questions and answers aloud.

Tanya. Is it true that one can talk with spirits by means of a saucer?

Feodor Ivanuitch. It may be so.

TANYA. Well, if they tell him to sign, will he really sign?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. What do you mean?

TANYA. They don't speak in words, do they?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. By an alphabet. Whatever letter they stop at, he notes it down.

TANYA. Well, and if at a see-ants?....

SCENE XL

The Same, and LEONID FEODOROVITCH

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Well, my friends, I cannot do it. I should like to, but I cannot possibly. If you paid all the money down, that would be another thing.

FIRST MUZHIK. Reely, that would be better. But the people have small means; and so it 's perfectly impossible.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. I cannot, cannot possibly. Here is your paper. I can't sign it.

THIRD MUZHIK. Be merciful, father, show your kind heart.

SECOND MUZHIK. How can one do so? It 's an outrage!

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. It 's no outrage, friends. Last summer I told you: if you want it, do it. You did n't want to; now I can't.

THIRD MUZHIK. Father! show your kind heart! How can we live now? We have little land. Not enough room for cattle nor even for a hen.

(LEONID FEODOROVITCH *goes and stands by the door.*)

SCENE XLI

The Same; the lady and the doctor come down. Behind them VASILI LEONIDUITCH, *in a gay and sprightly frame of mind, is putting money in his pocket-book*

THE BARUINYA (*tightly laced, with her bonnet on*). So it 's to be taken, is it?

THE DOCTOR. If the symptoms are repeated, it is assuredly to be taken. But the main thing is — conduct yourself more sensibly. Now how could you expect that a thick syrup would pass through a delicate capillary tube, when we still further compress that little tube? It 's impossible. So it is with the gall-duct. Why, this is all very simple.

THE BARUINYA. Well, very good, very good.

THE DOCTOR. It 's "very good," but it still remains just as before. It cannot go on, baruinya, it is impossible. Well, good-by.

THE BARUINYA. Not good-by.[1] I shall expect you this evening anyway. Without you I cannot decide.

THE DOCTOR. All right, all right. If I have time I will come. (*Exit.*)

SCENE XLII

The Same, without the DOCTOR

THE BARUINYA (*seeing the* MUZHIKS). What is this? What does it mean? What men are these? (*The* MUZHIKS *make low bows.*)

FEODOR IVANUITCH. These are peasants from near Kursk come about buying land of Leonid Feodorovitch.

THE BARUINYA. I see they are peasants, but who let them come in?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Leonid Feodorovitch gave the order. They have just been talking with him about the sale of the land.

THE BARUINYA. What sale, pray? We don't need to sell any land. But the main thing — what an idea to let men in from the street into the house. How could they let men in from the street. It is impossible to let people in who have been sleeping God knows where. .... (*She grows more and more excited.*) In their garments, I imagine every fold is just full of microbes: microbes

[1] The Doctor says *proshchaïte;* corresponding to the French adieu; the lady replies, *nye proshchaïte a da svidanya*, "till we meet," *au revoir.*

of scarlatina, microbes of smallpox, microbes of diphtheria. For you see they are from near Kursk, from the government of Kursk, where diphtheria is epidemic! .... Doctor, Doctor! Call the doctor back!

(LEONID FEODOROVITCH *goes out, closing the door.* GRIGORI *hastens after the doctor.*)

SCENE XLIII

The Same, without LEONID FEODOROVITCH *and* GRIGORI

VASILI LEONIDUITCH (*puffs smoke over the muzhiks*). It 's all right, mamma. If you wish I 'll smoke them so that it 'll be death to all microbes. What do you say? (THE BARUINYA *preserves a stony silence, waiting the* DOCTOR'S *return.*) (*To the muzhiks.*) Do you breed pigs? There's some profit in that.

FIRST MUZHIK. Reely, sometimes we have to do with pigs!

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. Like this .... i-u, i-u? (*Grunts like a young pig.*)

THE BARUINYA. Vovò, Vovò! Stop!

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. Good imitation. What do you say?

FIRST MUZHIK. Reely, very like!

THE BARUINYA. Vovò, stop, I tell you!

SECOND MUZHIK. What does he do that for?

THIRD MUZHIK. I said we ought to go to our lodging while ....

SCENE XLIV

The Same, the DOCTOR, *and* GRIGORI

THE DOCTOR. Well, what is it now? What is the matter?

THE BARUINYA. Here you are telling us not to get excited. Well, how can one be calm? I have not visited my sister for two months. I deny myself to

every dubious caller. And suddenly, here in the middle of my house are men from Kursk — straight from Kursk, where diphtheria is epidemic!

THE DOCTOR. What — these galliards?

THE BARUINYA. Why, yes, straight from the diphtheria district.

THE DOCTOR. Yes, of course, if they are from a diphtheria district, then, of course, it's careless; still there's no reason for being excited.

THE BARUINYA. But you yourself prescribe extreme caution.

THE DOCTOR. Why, yes, why, yes; only there's no need of getting much excited.

THE BARUINYA. Why, what do you mean? We must have complete disinfection.

THE DOCTOR. No; why complete? That would cost too much — three hundred rubles, and probably more. And I will arrange it for you cheaply and just as effective. Add to one large bottle of water....

THE BARUINYA. Distilled?

THE DOCTOR. It makes no difference. Distilled water is better.... To one bottle of water, a tablespoonful of salicylic acid, and have everything washed with it which they have touched; and send away these galliards themselves, of course. That is all. Then it's safe. Then take two or three glassfuls of the same solution and spray it into the air with the atomizer, and see how good it will be. Perfectly harmless.

THE BARUINYA. Is Tanya there? Call Tanya.

SCENE XLV

The Same, and TANYA

TANYA. What do you wish?

THE BARUINYA. You know the large bottle in the dressing-room?

TANYA. From which you sprinkled the washerwoman yesterday?

THE BARUINYA. Why, yes — what other one is there? Now, then, take that bottle .... and first wash the place where they are standing with soap, then with this. ....

TANYA. I will obey. I know how.

THE BARUINYA. Then take the atomizer. .... However, I will come back; I'll do that myself.

THE DOCTOR. Then do so, and don't be afraid. Well, then, *da svidanya!* — till this evening. (*Exit.*)

SCENE XLVI

The Same, without the DOCTOR

THE BARUINYA. And away with these men, away with them, so that not a breath from them may be left! Off with them! off with them! Go! What are you staring at?

FIRST MUZHIK. Reely, we were so stupid, when we were told ....

GRIGORI (*leading the muzhiks away*). Well, well, go! go!

SECOND MUZHIK. Give me my handkerchief, then.

THIRD MUZHIK. O Lord! I said it would be better to go to our lodgings.

(GRIGORI *pushes him out.*)

SCENE XLVII

The LADY, GRIGORI, FEODOR IVANUITCH, TANYA, VASILI LEONIDUITCH, *and the* ERRAND-BOY

ERRAND-BOY (*who has tried several times to speak*). Am I going to have an answer?

THE BARUINYA. Ah, it's the boy from Bourdier's (*growing angry*). There is none, there is none! and take it back. I told her that I had not ordered such a costume and I won't allow my daughter to wear it.

ERRAND-BOY. I know nothing about it — I was sent.

THE BARUINYA. Go! Go and take it back. I will go there myself.

VASILI LEONIDUITCH (*solemnly*). Mr. Ambassador from Bourdier, depart!

ERRAND-BOY. You might have said that long ago. Here I 've been sitting five hours.

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. Emissary of Bourdier, depart!

THE BARUINYA. Stop now, I beg of you.

(*Exit* THE ERRAND-BOY.)

SCENE XLVIII

The Same, without the ERRAND-BOY

THE BARUINYA. Betsy! where is she? One has to wait an age for her!

VASILI LEONIDUITCH (*screams at the top of his voice*). Betsy! Petrishchef! Come quick! hurry! hurry! What do you say?

SCENE XLIX

The Same, PETRISHCHEF, BETSY, *and* MARYA KONSTANTINOVNA

THE BARUINYA. We have to wait an age for you.

BETSY. On the contrary, I have been waiting for you. (PETRISHCHEF *nods and kisses the lady's hand.*)

THE BARUINYA. How are you? (*To* BETSY.) You always have an answer ready.

BETSY. Mamma, if you are not in good spirits, then I 'd rather not go with you.

THE BARUINYA. Are we going, or are we not going?

BETSY. Yes, let us go; what 's to be done?

THE BARUINYA. Did you see what Bourdier sent?

BETSY. I saw it, and I liked it very much. I ordered the costume, and I 'll wear it when it 's paid for.

THE BARUINYA. I won't pay for it, and I won't permit you to wear an improper costume.

BETSY. When did it become improper? At one time it was becoming, but then *pruderie* came over you. ....

THE BARUINYA. Not *pruderie;* but if the whole waist is made over, it might do.

BETSY. Mamma, truly that is impossible.

THE BARUINYA. Well, get your things on. (*They sit down;* GRIGORI *puts on their shoes.*)

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. Marya Konstantinovna! Do you see what emptiness reigns in the anteroom?

MARYA KONSTANTINOVNA. What is it? (*Laughs in advance.*)

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. The boy from Bourdier is gone. What do you say? Is that good? (*Laughs boisterously.*)

THE BARUINYA. Well, let us go! (*Goes to the door and immediately returns.*) Tanya!

TANYA. What do you order?

THE BARUINYA. Don't let Fifka take cold while I am gone. If she should beg to be let out, then don't fail to put on her little yellow coat. She is n't quite well.

TANYA. Very good.

(*Exeunt* THE BARUINYA, BETSY, *and* GRIGORI.)

SCENE L

PETRISHCHEF, VASILI LEONIDUITCH, TANYA, *and* FEODOR IVANUITCH

PETRISHCHEF. Well, now, tell me; did you get it?

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. I'll tell you, it was hard work. First I went to my progenitor; he roared at me and drove me away. Then I went to my progenitrix and I got it. It's here! (*Slaps his pocket.*) If I undertake anything, there's no getting away from me! Regular nippers! What do you say? And they'll bring my wolf-hounds to-day.

(PETRISHCHEF *and* VASILI LEONIDUITCH *put on their coats and leave the room.* TANYA *follows them.*)

Scene LI

Feodor Ivanuitch *alone*

Feodor Ivanuitch. Yes, always disagreeable scenes. Why is it they can't live in concord. Yes; to tell the truth, the young generation is different. And the rule of women? Why, only a short time ago how Leonid Feodorovitch wanted to favor them, but he saw that she was in a fret and he slammed the door to. He 's a man of rare goodness. Yes, of rare goodness. .... What does this mean? Tanya bringing them back again?

Scene LII

Tanya. Come in, come in, little uncles, it 's all right.

Feodor Ivanuitch. Why have you brought them in again?

Tanya. Why, you see, Feodor Ivanuitch, batyushka, we must try to work out some plan for them. I 'll wash up and make it as good as new.

Feodor Ivanuitch. Why, he won't agree to it; I can see that plainly enough.

First Muzhik. Tell us, respected sir, will our business be successful? You, your honor, might take a little trouble for us and we can express the full gratitude of the mir as a reward for your pains.

Third Muzhik. Try, dear heart, — it is impossible for us to live. We have little land — there isn't room enough for cattle, even for a hen I might say. (*He bows.*)

Feodor Ivanuitch. I am sorry for you, and I know how it is, brothers. I understand it very well. But you see he has refused. How can it be managed now? And the baruinya is also against it. It 's unlikely. However, give me your paper. I 'll go, I 'll see what I can do. I 'll implore him. (*Exit.*)

Scene LIII

TANYA *and* THREE MUZHIKS (*they sigh*)

TANYA. Will you tell me, little uncles, what your business is.

FIRST MUZHIK. Why, it was only to put his hand on as a signature.

TANYA. You mean that the barin should sign a paper? Yes?

FIRST MUZHIK. That 's all — just to put his hand to it and take the money, and that settles it.

THIRD MUZHIK. All he would need to do is to sign! As the muzhiks want, so, let him say, do I want. And that 's all there is to it. He takes the money and signs, and — that's the end of it.

TANYA. All it needs is to sign? Simply to have the barin sign the paper? (*Ponders.*)

FIRST MUZHIK. Reely that 's all the affair depends on. When he has signed — of course, there 's nothing more needed.

TANYA. You wait a little and see what Feodor Ivanuitch will say .... If he does n't persuade him, I 'll try my hand.

FIRST MUZHIK. You 'll bring him round?

TANYA. I 'll try.

THIRD MUZHIK. Aï! you 're going to work for us, girl? If only you make the business good; I say we 'll bind ourselves to support you all your life long at the expense of the mir. That 's something!

FIRST MUZHIK. If you succeed in carrying out such a scheme, reely, we can make you rich.

SECOND MUZHIK. That 's the talk!

TANYA. Truly I can't promise, as the saying goes: —

"A trial
Is no denial,"

but ....

FIRST MUZHIK. But to ask is no task! It 's reely so.

Scene LIV

The Same, and Feodor Ivanuitch

Feodor Ivanuitch. No, brothers, your affair won't go; he did n't agree and he won't agree. Go, go!

First Muzhik (*takes the paper. To* Tanya). So, then, we shall have to depend on you.

Tanya. Presently, presently. You go wait outside, and in a minute I 'll come and tell you what.

(*Exeunt* Muzhiks.)

Scene LV

Feodor Ivanuitch *and* Tanya

Tanya. Feodor Ivanuitch, dearest, go and ask the barin to come out to me. I need to have a little word with him.

Feodor Ivanuitch. What news have you?

Tanya. It is important, Feodor Ivanuitch. Tell him, please; it 's no harm, I assure you.

Feodor Ivanuitch. What 's it about?

Tanya. Oh, it 's a little secret. I 'll tell you by and by. But please go and speak to him.

Feodor Ivanuitch (*smiling*). I don't understand what you are up to. However, I 'll tell him, I 'll tell him. (*Exit.*)

Scene LVI

Tanya *alone*

Tanya. Truly, I 'll do it. Why, he himself has said that Semyon has the power; and you see, I know just how to work it. Then, no one has a suspicion. But now I 'll coach Semyon. And if the thing does n't work, there 's no harm done. What 's the sin?

Scene LVII

Tanya, Leonid Feodorovitch, *and, following them,* Feodor Ivanuitch

Leonid Feodorovitch (*smiling*). So here's the little petitioner. What is your trouble?

Tanya. It's a little secret, Leonid Feodorovitch. Permit me to tell you alone by ourselves.

Leonid Feodorovitch. What can it be?.... Feodor, leave us for a moment.

Scene LVIII

Leonid Feodorovitch *and* Tanya

Tanya. As I was born and have lived in your house, Leonid Feodorovitch, and as I am grateful to you for everything, I will open my heart as to my own father. Semyon, who is living with us, wants to marry me.

Leonid Feodorovitch. What is that?

Tanya. I will be open before you as before God. I have no one to consult with, as I am an orphan....

Leonid Feodorovitch. Well, why not? He seems like a good young fellow.

Tanya. That is so; and there would be no objection if I were not dubious about one thing.... and I wanted to ask you.... there is one thing about him, and I can't make out what to do.... whether it is anything bad.

Leonid Feodorovitch. What is it? Does he drink?

Tanya. No, thank God! But as I know, there is such a thing as spirit-alism....

Leonid Feodorovitch. You know that?

Tanya. Certainly I do! I am greatly interested in it. Others, like as not, not being educated, don't understand it....

Leonid Feodorovitch. Well, what about it?

Tanya. Well, you see, I'm troubled about Semyon. This happens with him.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. What happens?

TANYA. Well, it's something like spirit-alism. Ask the domestics about it. As soon as he goes to sleep at the table, immediately the table begins to shake; everything squeaks like this, *tuk — tu — tuk*. All the domestics have heard it.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Why, that's just what I told Sergyeï Ivanovitch this morning. Well? ....

TANYA. Then .... when was it? .... Yes, on Wednesday. We had just sat down to dinner. He had hardly sat down at the table when the spoon of itself jumped right into his hand!

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Ah! that is interesting. Jumped into his hand? Tell me, was he asleep?

TANYA. I did not notice. I think he must have been.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Well?

TANYA. Well, now I'm afraid, and on this account I wanted to ask whether there would be any harm come of it? To live together a lifetime and such a thing in him!

LEONID FEODOROVITCH (*smiling*). No, don't be worried; there's no harm in it. That simply signifies that he is a medium, merely a medium. I knew beforehand that he was a medium.

TANYA. Is that it? .... And I was really alarmed.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. No, don't be alarmed; it's nothing. (*Aside.*) Now this is fine! Kapchitch can't be here, and we'll experiment with him this evening. .... No, my dear, don't be alarmed. He will make you a good husband, and always. .... And this peculiar power, it's in all people. Only in some it's weaker, in others it's stronger.

TANYA. I thank you humbly. Now I won't think about it any more. But I was alarmed! .... That of course comes from our lack of learning.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. No, no, don't be alarmed. .... Feodor!

Scene LIX

The Same, and Feodor Ivanuitch

Leonid Feodorovitch. I am going out. It 's to get everything ready for the séance this evening.

Feodor Ivanuitch. You know Kapchitch decided not to come.

Leonid Feodorovitch. No matter; it 's all the same! (*Puts on his cloak.*) A test séance we 'll have with our own medium.

(*Exit.* Feodor Ivanuitch *accompanies him.*)

Scene LX

Tanya *alone*

Tanya. He believed it, he believed it. (*Squeals and jumps.*) My gracious, he believed it! It 's a real miracle! (*Squeals.*) Now I 'll manage it, if only Semyon does n't lose his wits.

Scene LXI

Tanya *and* Feodor Ivanuitch

Feodor Ivanuitch (*coming back*). Well, have you told your secret?

Tanya. Yes, I have. And I will tell it to you — only afterward! And I have a favor to ask of you also, Feodor Ivanuitch.

Feodor Ivanuitch. What favor have you to ask of me?

Tanya (*blushingly*). You have been like a second father to me, and I will speak to you openly as before God!

Feodor Ivanuitch. Now don't you flatter; straight to the point!

TANYA. The point? The point is that Semyon wants to marry me.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. What is that? That explains what I 've noticed. ....

TANYA. Yes, why should I hide it. I am an orphan, and you yourself know how people behave here in the city: every one's after you — even Grigori Mikhaïluitch .... I can't get rid of him. .... That one also. .... You know? They think I have no soul, that I am made for their plaything. ....

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Clever girl, I praise you! Well, what now?

TANYA. Well, Semyon wrote his father, and he, that is, his father, has seen me to-day, and first thing he says: he 's spoilt — that is about his son .... Feodor Ivanuitch! (*bows*) take the place of my father, speak with the old man, with Semyon's father. I might take them into the kitchen and you might find them there and talk with the old man.

FEODOR IVANUITCH (*smiling*). That means, you want me to be your matchmaker, does it? Well, it 's in my power.

TANYA. Feodor Ivanuitch, dear, take the place of my own father, and I will pray God for you as long as I live.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Very good, very good; I 'll go by and by. I promise you, I 'll do it. (*Takes up his newspaper.*)

TANYA. Be my second father.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Very good, very good.

TANYA. Then, I shall have some hope. .... (*Exit.*)

SCENE LXII

FEODOR IVANUITCH *alone*

FEODOR IVANUITCH (*wags his head*). Ah! she is a gentle, pretty little girl. Just think how many such are ruined! Why, if they take only one misstep — they go from hand to hand! .... Then there 's no one to pull them out of the mire! Just as badly as that darling Natalya.

.... She also was pretty and her mother cherished her and looked after her and brought her up well. .... (*Takes his newspaper.*) Well now, how is our Ferdinand going to get out of it? ....

CURTAIN

ACT II

The stage represents the interior of the domestics' kitchen. The muzhiks with their coats off and all sweaty are sitting at the table drinking tea. FEODOR IVANUITCH, *with a cigar, is at the farther end of the stage. On the stove the old cook, but he is not visible during the first four scenes.*

SCENE I

The THREE MUZHIKS *and* FEODOR IVANUITCH

FEODOR IVANUITCH. My advice is that you don't stand in his way. If it 's his wish and hers too, then God be with them. The girl is pretty and honest. No matter if she is dressy. That 's the city way; you can't get along without it. Besides, the girl 's clever.

SECOND MUZHIK. Well, if that 's his wish. He 's got to live with her, not I. Only she 's too mighty fine. How can we get along with her in our izba? She won't let her husband's mother even pat her!

FEODOR IVANUITCH. That, my worthy brother, does n't come from fineness, but from character. If she has a good character, then she will be submissive and considerate.

SECOND MUZHIK. Well, I'll take her, if the lad is so set upon it that he must have her. It 's a bad thing for a man to live with one he does n't love. I 'll consult with my old woman, and then trust it to God.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Then your hand on it.

SECOND MUZHIK. Well, it seems to be settled so.

FIRST MUZHIK. How lucky you are, Zakhar! You come here to settle up some business and you get a regular queen for a daughter-in-law. Only you must wet it down a little, of course, to make it regular.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. That is not necessary at all. (*Awkward silence.*) You see, I understand very well the life you peasants lead. I will tell you I am thinking of buying a little land. I should like to build a little house and live like a peasant.[1] Perhaps in your region.

SECOND MUZHIK. It 's lovely work.

FIRST MUZHIK. Reely, with money one can buy every kind of comfort in the country.

THIRD MUZHIK. That 's the talk! Country life, I 'll say, is free at any rate, not at all as it is in the city.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Tell me, would you take me into your mir if I should settle among you?

SECOND MUZHIK. Of course we would. You 'd set up liquor for the elders and then they 'd admit you.

FIRST MUZHIK. You might open a drinking establishment, for instance, or a tavern; then you 'd have such a life that you 'd not need to die at all! You 'd reign like a little tsar and be at the tip-top!

FEODOR IVANUITCH. We 'll see. I should only wish to live a quiet life till old age. Even here I live well enough, and I should be sorry to leave it. Leonid Feodorovitch, you see, is a man of rare goodness.

FIRST MUZHIK. That 's reely so. But why did he treat our business so? Is it to be left as it is without results?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. He would like to.

SECOND MUZHIK. It seems he 's afraid of his wife.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Not afraid of her; but they don't agree.

THIRD MUZHIK. But, father, if you would only help us. For how are we to live? We have little land. ....

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Well, let us see what will come about from Tatyana's labors. You know she has taken hold of it.

[1] *Krest'yanstvoval*, a verb from *krest'yanin*, a peasant, the "Christian."

THIRD MUZHIK (*drinks tea*). Father, show your kind heart. We have little land; there 's not room for cattle, nor even for a hen. ....

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Well, if only this affair were in my hands! (*To the* SECOND MUZHIK.) So, it 's settled, brother;[1] you and I are to be the matchmakers. There 's nothing more to be said about Tanya?

SECOND MUZHIK. If I have already given my word I don't take it back, even though we have n't wet it down. If only our affairs could be settled.

SCENE II

The Same: enter the COOK; *she glances at the stove, makes gestures in that direction, and immediately begins to talk animatedly with* FEODOR IVANUITCH

THE COOK. They 've just called Semyon up-stairs from the "white" kitchen; the barin and that man who summons with him, the bald one, have sat him down and ordered him to act in place of Kapchitch.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. What lie are you telling?

THE COOK. It 's a fact! Yakof just told Tanya.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. That 's strange!

SCENE III

The Same, and the COACHMAN

FEODOR IVANUITCH. What do you want?

THE COACHMAN (*to* FEODOR IVANUITCH). You may say that I was n't hired to live with dogs. Let some one else live with dogs, I don't agree to!

FEODOR IVANUITCH. What dogs?

COACHMAN. Vasili Leoniduitch has had three dogs sent to us, to the coachmen's quarters. They 've soiled all round, they are howling, and it 's impossible to come near 'em — they bite! They 're ugly devils — they 'll

[1] *Tak tak, bratyets; tak* means so or yes.

chew you up quick as a wink. I'd like to smash their legs with a stick of wood.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. When did this happen?

COACHMAN. Well, they were brought to-day from the exhibition; some kind of costly thick-furred dogs — the demon only knows what they are. Either the dogs or the coachmen must leave the coachmen's quarters. Tell 'em so.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Yes, that's out of order. I'll go and find out.

COACHMAN. Let them be brought here to Lukerya.

THE COOK (*hotly*). People eat here, and you want to shut dogs up in here! Even as it is....

COACHMAN. In my place there are kaftans, fur robes, and harnesses. And they expect neatness of us. Well, I suppose they can go to the dvornik's room.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. I must talk with Vasili Leoniduitch.

COACHMAN (*angrily*). He'd better hang these dogs round his neck, yes, and go driving round with 'em. He likes nothing better than driving about. He's ruined "Krasavchik," all for nothing. What a horse he was!.... ekh! what a life! (*He goes out, slamming the door.*)

SCENE IV

The Same, without the COACHMAN

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Yes, bad doings, bad doings! (*To the muzhiks.*) Well, boys, since it's all decided, good-by for now.

THE MUZHIKS. *S Bogom* — God be with you!

(*Exit* FEODOR IVANUITCH.)

SCENE V

The Same, without FEODOR IVANUITCH

(*As soon as* FEODOR IVANUITCH *leaves the kitchen, groaning is heard on the stove.*)

SECOND MUZHIK. He's as smooth spoken as a general.[1]

THE COOK. That's the talk! A room to himself; all his washing done by the masters; tea, sugar — all furnished him, and food from their table.

THE OLD MAN-COOK. Why the devil should n't he steal? — he steals!

SECOND MUZHIK. Who's that — on the stove?

THE COOK. He's a little old man. (*Silence.*)

FIRST MUZHIK. Well, I saw you a little while ago; you were having supper: you must be quite rich folks.

THE COOK. We can't complain. As far as that goes, she's not stingy; white bread on Sundays, fish on fast days, and whoever wants eats meat.

SECOND MUZHIK. Does any one eat on fast days?

THE COOK. Eh! yes, probably all do. The only ones who fast are the coachman — not the one that came in, but the old one — and Sioma, yes, and I and the housekeeper — but all the rest eat meat.

SECOND MUZHIK. He himself does, I suppose.

THE COOK. Eh! what an idea. He's forgotten to remember what a fast is!

THIRD MUZHIK. O Lord!

FIRST MUZHIK. That's the great folks' way; they find it in books. Because it's intellect!

THIRD MUZHIK. Sitnik-bread every day, I suppose!

THE COOK. Sitnik-bread! They never see such coarse bread! You should just see what they eat! What don't they have![2]

FIRST MUZHIK. Great folks' food, of course, is airy stuff.

THE COOK. Airy stuff, indeed! I tell you they are healthy eaters.

FIRST MUZHIK. With an eppetite,[3] of course.

THE COOK. Because they drink with it. Those sweet kind of wines, brandies, frothy liquors; each course has its own kind. It's eat and drink, eat and drink.

[1] He calls it *anaral.*
[2] *Chevo, chevo nyet,* of what, of what, not.
[3] The peasant says "appekite."

First Muzhik. Of course it 's *pre*portioned out, and each kind is brought.

The Cook. It is a sight! what healthy feeders they are! With them it is n't sitting down, eating, crossing yourself, and getting up — but they keep at it.

Second Muzhik. Like hogs with their feet in the trough. (*The muzhiks laugh.*)

The Cook. Lord save us! Scarcely do they get their eyes open, immediately comes the samovar, tea, coffee, *shchikolat*. As soon as they have drunk up two samovars, then it 's "put on another." And then breakfast, and then it 's dinner, and there 's coffee again. As soon as they 've stuffed themselves then they have tea again. Then they 're eating little snacks: candy and jam, and there 's no end to it! Even lying in bed they 're still eating!

Third Muzhik. Yes, so it is. (*Laughs heartily.*)

First and Second Muzhiks. What 's the matter with you?

Third Muzhik. I 'd like to live one little day like that!

Second Muzhik. Well, but when do they do their work?

The Cook. What work do they do? Playing cards and on the piano is their only work. The young lady, just as soon as she opens her eyes, flies to the pianoforte and at it she goes! And that one who lives here, the teacher, she stands round and waits till they 're done with it, and as soon as it is free, she begins to pound at it! Sometimes they get two pianos and then four of 'em are hammering away, two at each. They hammer away till you can hear it down here.

Third Muzhik. O Lord!

The Cook. Well, that 's all their work; playing the piano and cards. As soon as they meet they have cards, they drink wine, they smoke, and so it goes all night. As soon as they 're up, they go to eating again.

Scene VI

The Same, and Semyon

Semyon. Tea and sugar!

First Muzhik. We beg you to sit down!

Semyon (*goes to the table*). Thank you humbly.

(First Muzhik *pours out tea for him.*)

Second Muzhik. Where have you been?

Semyon. Been up-stairs.

Second Muzhik. Tell us what is going on up there?

Semyon. It's beyond my comprehension. I don't know what you call it.

Second Muzhik. But tell us, what is it?

Semyon. I don't know what they call it. Some force they tried to find in me. I don't understand it. Tatyana says: "Do as I say and we'll get our muzhiks their land — he'll give it."

Second Muzhik. But how will she do it?

Semyon. I can't find out from her; she won't tell. "Only do as I tell you," says she.

Second Muzhik. But do what?

Semyon. Nothing especial at first. They made me sit down, they put out the light, they told me to go to sleep. And Tatyana was hiding there. They didn't see her, but I did.

Second Muzhik. What was that for?

Semyon. God knows, it's beyond me.

First Muzhik. Of course, it was to kill time.

Second Muzhik. Well, it's evident you and I can't make anything out of these things. But now tell me: have you taken much money in advance?

Semyon. I haven't taken any; it's all my wages; twenty-eight rubles are due me.

Second Muzhik. That's all right. Well, then, if God is willing and we come to terms about the land, I will take you home with me, Siomka.

SEMYON. That would be pleasant for me.

SECOND MUZHIK. You 've been spoilt, I fear. You won't want to plow, will you?

SEMYON. Plow? Give me a chance! Mowing and plowing — all that kind of thing suits my arm.

FIRST MUZHIK. But after living in the city things probably won't be very attractive to you.

SEMYON. Oh, no; one can live in the country, too.

FIRST MUZHIK. Now Uncle Mitri is after your place, for the soft living.

SEMYON. Well, Uncle Mitri, it gets tiresome. It looks easy at first, but there 's a lot of chasing round. You use yourself all up.

THE COOK. You just ought to see the balls they have, Uncle Mitri — that would surprise you.

THIRD MUZHIK. Tell me, do they keep eating?

THE COOK. The idea! You ought to see what takes place .... Feodor Ivanuitch took me along once. I looked on. The ladies were just elegant! Such dresses, such dresses! You 'd have been dumfounded — bare down to these places and with bare arms!

THIRD MUZHIK. O Lord!

SECOND MUZHIK. Tfu! how vulgar!

FIRST MUZHIK. Why! does the climate admit of that?

THE COOK. And I saw it with my own eyes, little uncle! Think of that! All of them naked! Would you believe it — even the old ladies were naked — our baruinya — she has grandchildren, you know.

SECOND MUZHIK. O Lord!

THE COOK. Then I saw this: When the music struck up, when they began to play, then instantly the gentlemen each went to his lady, put his arm round her, and began to whirl around.

SECOND MUZHIK. Even the old women?

THE COOK. Even the old women!

SEMYON. No, the old women keep their seats.

THE COOK. Nonsense, I saw it myself.

SEMYON. It 's not so.

THE OLD MAN-COOK (*raising himself up, hoarsely*).

That 's the polka-mazurka. Eh, fool! you don't know anything — that 's the way they dance. ....

THE COOK. There now, you dancer, hold your tongue. Vo! Some one 's coming!

SCENE VII

The Same, and GRIGORI. *The* OLD MAN-COOK *quickly hides himself*

GRIGORI (*to the* COOK). Give me some sauer-kraut.

THE COOK. I 've only just come from the cellar, down I must go again! Who 's this for?

GRIGORI. A mess for the young ladies! Lively!

THE COOK. Here they eat so much sweet that they can't eat any more; then they crave sauer-kraut!

FIRST MUZHIK. As a purge, of course.

THE COOK. Well, yes; as soon as there is a little room they are at it again. (*Takes a dish and exit.*)

SCENE VIII

The Same, without the COOK

GRIGORI (*to the muzhiks*). See how they have taken possession! Look out! If the baruinya gets wind of it, she 'll hackle your flax for you worse than she did a while ago! (*Laughs and goes away.*)

SCENE IX

The THREE MUZHIKS, SEMYON, *and the* OLD MAN-COOK *on the stove*

FIRST MUZHIK. Reely, she raised a storm a while ago .... it was a caution!

SECOND MUZHIK. At first, evidently, he was going to make the agreement with us; but then, when he saw that she would tear the roof off the izba, he slammed the door: "Go to the devil, I tell you."

THIRD MUZHIK (*waving his hand*). It 's the same

everywhere. So with my old woman. I tell you, when she gets red-hot .... she 's a terror! Then I get out of the izba. The devil take her. Look out, I tell you, or she 'll be after you with the poker. O Lord!

Scene X

The Same, and Yakof

Yakof (*comes running in with a recipe*). Sioma, run to the apothecary, quick, and get these powders for the baruinya.

Semyon. But, you see, he told me not to go off.

Yakof. You 'll have time enough. You won't be wanted till after tea .... tea and sugar!

First Muzhik. We ask your favor. (*Exit* Semyon.)

Scene XI

The Same, without Semyon

Yakof. No time .... well, pour me out a little cupful for company's sake.

First Muzhik. We were just holding a little talk: how very haughtily your lady behaved a while ago.

Yakof. Oh, she 's fiery; it 's a caution! So fiery .... she does n't know what she 's doing. Sometimes she actually weeps with rage!

First Muzhik. That, for instance, I waited to ask. She had something to say about the makrotes: .... "they 've brought makrotes, with them," says she, "makrotes," what do they use these same makrotes for?

Yakof. Those are makroves, not makrotes. They say they 're a kind of bug; from them all sorts of diseases spring. Now perhaps they are on you. As soon as you had gone they washed and washed and rinsed and rinsed where you had been standing. There 's a kind of drug which kills these bugs.

Second Muzhik. But where on us are these bugs?

YAKOF (*drinks tea*). Well, they say they are so small that you can't see even with a glass.

SECOND MUZHIK. But how do they know that they 're on me? Maybe there 's more of the vile things on her than on me.

YAKOF. I 'd go and ask her, if I were you.

SECOND MUZHIK. I think it 's all empty nonsense.

YAKOF. Of course it 's nonsense; but the doctors must invent something; else, why should we pay them our money? Here 's one comes to us every day. Comes in, talks awhile .... "ten rubles!"

SECOND MUZHIK. You don't say![1]

YAKOF. Well, there 's one so fine, he gets a hundred!

FIRST MUZHIK. What, a hundred?

YAKOF. A hundred!.... You say a hundred? Why, he gets it by the thousand, when he goes out of town. "Give a thousand," says he, "but if you don't give, you may perish."

THIRD MUZHIK. O Lord!

SECOND MUZHIK. Tell us, does he know some spell?

YAKOF. It must be he knows. Where I lived before was at a general's .... near Moscow .... he was that stern, and proud .... he was terrible .... that general! Well, his little daughter took sick. They immediately sent for this one. "A thousand rubles and I 'll come." .... Well, they agreed .... he came. Well, something did not please him. .... O ye fathers, how he flew at the general! "Oh," said he, "this is the way you treat me, is it? Then I won't tend this case." Would you believe it! That general forgot his pride, coaxed him in every way. "Batyushka! please don't desert us!" ....

FIRST MUZHIK. And he gave him a thousand?

YAKOF. Indeed, he did.

SECOND MUZHIK. Foolish waste of money! What would n't us muzhiks have done with it!

THIRD MUZHIK. I think it 's all nonsense too. That time when my leg was gangrened, I went to the doctor

[1] Expressed by the one word *vre*, from the peasant word *vrat*, to babble, to lie.

and went to the doctor; I say I spent five rubles on medicine. I stopped doctoring, and it got well!

(*The* OLD MAN-COOK *on the stove coughs.*)

YAKOF. Again here, friend?

FIRST MUZHIK. What kind of a little man is that?

YAKOF. He used to be our barin's cook; he comes to see Lukerya.

FIRST MUZHIK. Master-cook, I suppose. Tell me, does he live here?

YAKOF. Nay! They don't allow him here. He spends his days in one place, his nights in another. If he has three kopeks, he sleeps under cover; when he's drunk up all he has he comes here.

SECOND MUZHIK. How did he get so?

YAKOF. Well, he lost his grip. And yet he was a fine man, like a barin! He wore a gold watch, and he had forty rubles a month wages. And now he'd have starved to death if it had not been for Lukerya.

SCENE XII

The Same, and the COOK (*with sauer-kraut*)

YAKOF (*to* LUKERYA). So Paul Petrovitch is here again, is he?

THE COOK. Where can he go — do you want him to freeze to death?

THIRD MUZHIK. What does n't liquor do! Liquor, I say! (*Clucks his tongue with sympathy.*)

SECOND MUZHIK. It's well known if a man is strong — he's stronger than granite; if he's weak, he's weaker than water.

THE OLD MAN-COOK (*climbs down from the stove with shaky legs and hands*). Lukerya, I say, give me a little glass.

THE COOK. Where are you crawling to? I'll give you such a glass ....

THE OLD MAN-COOK. Do you fear God? I'm dying! Brothers, a five-kopek piece....

THE COOK. I say, climb back on the stove.

THE OLD MAN-COOK. Cook! a h-half glass! For Christ's sake, I say; do you understand? I beg you for Christ's sake!....

THE COOK. Go, go! Here 's tea for you.

THE OLD MAN-COOK. What 's tea? tea? Slops! weak stuff! A little liquor.... just a mouthful.... Lukerya!

THIRD MUZHIK. Akh, friend, how tormented he is?

SECOND MUZHIK. Do give him some!

THE COOK (*gets a small glass from the cupboard and fills it up*). There, I won't give you any more.

THE OLD MAN-COOK (*seizes it and drinks it eagerly*). Lukerya! Cook! I drink and you understand....

THE COOK. Well, well, stop talking. Climb up on the stove, and don't make a sound.

(*The* OLD MAN-COOK *climbs up obediently, and mumbles something incessantly between his teeth.*)

SECOND MUZHIK. That 's what comes when a man 's weak!

FIRST MUZHIK. Reely, human weakness!

THIRD MUZHIK. What 's to be said?

(*The* OLD MAN-COOK *stows himself away, and keeps mumbling. Silence.*)

SECOND MUZHIK. What I wanted to ask.... this girl from our place who lives here.... Aksinya's daughter. Now how about her? How does she live, — tell me, is she straight?

YAKOF. She 's a nice girl; you can praise her.

THE COOK. I 'll tell you truly, little uncle, for I know how things go on here; if you mean to take Tatyana for your son, take her quick before she 's spoilt, or else it 'll be too late.

YAKOF. Yes, that 's truly so. Here last summer Natalya was a girl living with us. She was a pretty girl.

Still she fell — worse than him there.... (*Points to the* MAN-COOK.)

THE COOK. The fact is so many of us women are ruined — they would dam a pond! Every one is attracted by the easy work and the rich food. But you see, with the rich food one soon goes astray. And as soon as she 's gone astray, then they don't want her any more. They throw her aside — and get a fresh one in her place. So it was with Natasha, poor girl. She went astray; they immediately drove her off. She had a baby, took sick, last spring she went to the hospital, and died there. And what a girl she was!

THIRD MUZHIK. O Lord! Folks are weak; they need our pity.

THE OLD MAN-COOK. Yes, how they pity us! the devils! (*Puts his legs down from the stove.*) For thirty years I roasted over the hearth-stone. And now I 'm no longer needed, die like a dog! that 's how they pity us!

FIRST MUZHIK. It 's reely so; every one knows how it is!

SECOND MUZHIK. While they 're drinking and eating they call you curly-head; when they 've done drinking and eating — good-by, frowsly-head!

THIRD MUZHIK. O Lord!

THE OLD MAN-COOK. You know a lot! What does it mean: *soté à la bamong?* What does it mean: *bavasari?* What can't I do? Think of it! The emperor has eaten my work! But now I 'm no longer necessary to those devils. But I don't give in yet!

THE COOK. Well, well, he 's begun to talk! I 'll give it to you! Creep into your corner, lest you be seen, or else Feodor Ivanuitch will be coming, or some one else, and drive us both off together. (*Silence.*)

YAKOF. Do you know my place — Voznesenskoye?

SECOND MUZHIK. Of course, we know it! It 's seventeen versts, not more, by the river still less. Have you land there?

YAKOF. My brother has some, and I send him help. I myself have to stay here, but I 'm dying for home.

FIRST MUZHIK. Reely!

SECOND MUZHIK. Anisim's your brother, I suppose?

YAKOF. Certainly, my own brother; at the farther end.

SECOND MUZHIK. Of course.... the third place.

SCENE XIII

The Same, and TANYA (*comes in running*)

TANYA. Yakof Ivanuitch! why are you taking your ease here? You're called!

YAKOF. Directly. What is it?

TANYA. Firka is barking; she wants something to eat, and her mistress is scolding about you: "What is that rascal up to? He has no pity," says she. "It's time for his dinner long ago, and he doesn't bring it." (*Laughs.*)

YAKOF (*starts to go*). Oh, is she furious? I hope it hasn't got so far as that!

THE COOK (*to* YAKOF). Take the sauer-kraut.

YAKOF. Give it to me, give it to me!

(*Seizes the sauer-kraut and exit.*)

SCENE XIV

The Same, without YAKOF

FIRST MUZHIK. Who is to have dinner now?

TANYA. Oh, the dog. It's her dog.... (*She sits down with them and reaches for the teapot.*) Isn't there any tea?.... If not, I've brought some more! (*Shakes in some more.*)

SECOND MUZHIK. Do they give dinner to the dog?

TANYA. Certainly. They have a special cutlet for her, so that she shan't get too fat. And I wash the clothes for her, for the dog.

THIRD MUZHIK. O Lord!

TANYA. Like that barin who had a funeral for his dog.

SECOND MUZHIK. How was that?

TANYA. This was the way of it .... a man was telling us about it .... a barin had a dog and it died. And it was winter and he went out to bury it. He buried it, and as he drove along he wept — this barin. But there was a healthy frost and the coachman's nose ran, and he had to wipe it. .... Let me fill up your glasses. .... (*Pours out tea.*) His nose ran and he kept wiping it. The barin noticed it: "What are you crying about?" says he. And the coachman said, "How can I help crying when it was such a dog!" (*She laughs.*)

SECOND MUZHIK. I suppose he said to himself: — "If it had been his funeral I should n't have cried. .... (*Laughs.*)

THE OLD MAN-COOK (*from the stove*). That 's straight, indeed it is!

TANYA. Good! The barin got home, and he said to his wife: "What a good coachman we have," said he, "he wept all the way .... he was so sorry for my Druzhok. Call him in! .... There, have some vodka to drink and here's a reward for you;" .... a ruble! And she 's just like that; if Yakof does n't take pity on her dog! (*The muzhiks roar with laughter.*)

FIRST MUZHIK. Capital!

SECOND MUZHIK. That 's the way.

THIRD MUZHIK. Aï! girl, you 're comical!

TANYA (*pours out more tea*). Take some more! .... It sometimes looks as if life was fine here; but then again it 's disgusting to clean up all these vile things after them; tfu! .... it 's better in the country. (*The muzhiks turn up their cups*, TANYA *fills them.*) Drink for your good health, Yefim Antonuitch. I pour out for you, Mitri Vlasyevitch.

THIRD MUZHIK. All right, fill up, fill up.

FIRST MUZHIK. Well, Miss Cleverness, how is our business progressing?

TANYA. It 's all right; it 's coming on. ....

FIRST MUZHIK. Semyon told us....

TANYA (*quickly*). Told?

SECOND MUZHIK. We could n't understand from him.

TANYA. I can't explain it now, but I 'm doing my best, doing my best. Here it is.... your document! (*Shows them a paper under her apron.*) If only my little game succeeds!.... (*She squeals.*) How nice that would be!

SECOND MUZHIK. Look out you don't lose the paper. We had to pay money for it!

TANYA. Don't you worry. His name put to it is all you want, is n't it?

THIRD MUZHIK. Why, what else? His signature and that caps it. (*Turns down his cup.*) There, that 'll do.

TANYA (*aside*). He will sign it, you 'll see; he 'll sign it.... Have a little more! (*Pours more tea.*)

FIRST MUZHIK. If only you succeed in accomplishing the sale of the land to us, maybe the men will pay for your marriage. (*He declines the tea.*)

TANYA (*pours tea and offers it to him*). Have some!

THIRD MUZHIK. Only manage it for us! And we 'll give you a wedding, and I say, I 'll come and dance at it! Though I have n't danced since I was born, I 'll dance for you!

TANYA (*laughs*). Well, I 'm in hopes! (*Silence.*)

SECOND MUZHIK (*studying* TANYA). That 's very well; but you are n't fitted for peasant's work.

TANYA. I? Why, do you think I 'm not strong? You should see me pull the baruinya together. A muzhik could n't pull harder.

SECOND MUZHIK. What do you mean.... "you pull her together"?

TANYA. Why, it 's made of bones, like a jacket, nowadays. And you have to pull the lacings as when you harness a horse; sometime even spit on your hands.

SECOND MUZHIK. You mean you lace her up?

TANYA. Yes, yes, I lace her up. And you see you can't brace against her with your foot! (*Laughs.*)

SECOND MUZHIK. But why do you lace her up!

TANYA. Because we do!

SECOND MUZHIK. Tell me, has she taken a vow or what?

TANYA. No; for beauty's sake!

FIRST MUZHIK. It means she strains in her belly for the sake of shape!

TANYA. You pull so that your eyes bulge out, and she says: "More! more!" Then you blister your hands, and you say, "That 's the best I can do." (*The muzhiks laugh and shake their heads.*) But here, I am talking too much! (*Runs away, laughing.*)

SECOND MUZHIK. What a girl she is; she 's full of fun!

FIRST MUZHIK. And how smart!

SECOND MUZHIK. She 'll do.[1]

SCENE XV

The THREE MUZHIKS, *the* COOK, *the* OLD MAN-COOK (*on the stove*). *Enter* SAKHATOF *and* VASILI LEONIDUITCH. (SAKHATOF *has a teaspoon in his hand*)

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. Not exactly a dinner but *un déjeuner dinatoire!* A fine breakfast, I tell you!.... ham of a young porker.... lovely! Rouillet feeds one well. I 've only just got back. (*Noticing the muzhiks.*) These muzhiks here again?

SAKHATOF. Yes, yes, all that was excellent, but we came here to hide something. Where shall we hide it?

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. Excuse me, one instant. (*To the* COOK.) Where are the dogs?

THE COOK. The dogs are in the coachman's room. Could we have them in the domestics' room?

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. Oh, in the coachman's room. Very good.

SAKHATOF. I 'm waiting.

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. Excuse me, excuse me! What

[1] The Russian word, translated "smart," is *akkuratna*, accurate, with all it implies. The third peasant says simply *nitchevo*, which in a Russian's mouth means anything, though it means "nothing." — ED.

is it? Hide something? Yes, Sergyeï Ivanovitch, I 'll give you a suggestion; take the pocket of one of these muzhiks. Here, this one! You listen! Say, where is your pocket?

THIRD MUZHIK. What do you want of my pocket? What! my pocket? I have money in my pocket!

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. Well, then, where's your wallet?

THIRD MUZHIK. What 's that to you?

THE COOK. Mind you! That 's the young barin!

VASILI LEONIDUITCH (*laughs*). Do you know why he 's so alarmed? I 'll tell you; he has a pile of money. What?

SAKHATOF. Yes, yes, I understand. Well, then, this way: you talk with them, and meantime I 'll slip the spoon in this wallet, so that they themselves won't know it and can't give it away. You talk with them.

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. In a minute, in a minute. Well, how is it, boys,[1] shall you buy the land? What?

FIRST MUZHIK. We want to with all our hearts. Only things don't seem to progress.

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. Well, you must n't be close! Land is an important item. I 've told you about the mint. And you might raise tobacco, too.

FIRST MUZHIK. That 's reely so; all sorts of products can be raised.

THIRD MUZHIK. Now, father, you might intercede for us. How can we live otherwise? We have little land — not room even for a hen. ....

SAKHATOF (*placing the spoon in the* THIRD MUZHIK'S *wallet*). C'est fait. All right. Come on. (*Exit.*)

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. Now don't you be close! hey! Well, good-by! (*Exit.*)

SCENE XVI

The THREE MUZHIKS, *the* COOK, *and the* OLD MAN-COOK (*on the stove*)

THIRD MUZHIK. I advised going to our lodgings. For ten kopeks we might have had a comfortable room,

[1] *Rebyatushki*, little children.

at least; but here — God help us! — "Hand over your money," he says! What does that mean?

SECOND MUZHIK. They must have been drinking!

(*The muzhiks turn down their cups, get up, and cross themselves.*)

FIRST MUZHIK. Did you notice how he talked .... that we must sow mint? He must understand things.

SECOND MUZHIK. How sow mint, I 'd like to know! Just try it! Bend your back .... you pay dear for your mint. .... Well, we thank you humbly..... Well, good friend, where can we sleep?

THE COOK. One of you can lie on the stove — the others on the benches.

THIRD MUZHIK. *Spasi Christos* .... (*He prays to God.*)

FIRST MUZHIK. If God would only prosper our affair (*lies down*), to-morrow after dinner we might start home on the railroad and get there by Tuesday.

SECOND MUZHIK. Will you put out the light?

THE COOK. The idea of putting it out! They 'll keep running in, wanting first this, then that. .... However, you lie down; I 'll diminish it.

SECOND MUZHIK. How can we live on so little land? Ever since Christmas I have been buying grain. And the oat straw is at an end. I 'd take four desyatins, I 'd have Siomka at home.

FIRST MUZHIK. You have a family; you 'd get the land without trouble if he 'll only let us have it. If only this business were ended!

THIRD MUZHIK. We must pray to the Queen of Heaven. Perhaps she may have mercy on us.

SCENE XVII

Quiet; sighs. Then clattering steps and a confusion of voices are heard, the door is thrown wide open, and in rush pell-mell: GROSSMANN, *blindfolded, holding* SAKHATOF *by the hand, the* PROFESSOR *and the* DOCTOR, *the* STOUT LADY *and* LEONID FEODOROVITCH,

BETSY *and* PETRISHCHEF, VASILI LEONIDUITCH *and* MARYA KONSTANTINOVNA, *the* BARUINYA *and the* BARONESS, FEODOR IVANUITCH *and* TANYA. *The* THREE MUZHIKS, *the* COOK, *and the* OLD MAN-COOK (*invisible*). *The muzhiks jump up.* GROSSMANN *enters with hasty steps, then pauses.*

THE STOUT LADY. Don't worry, I 'm watching; I 've undertaken to follow him, and I 'll fulfil my duty to the letter. Sergyeï Ivanuitch, you are not leading him?

SAKHATOF. Why, no!

THE STOUT LADY. Don't you lead him, but don't resist him. (*To* LEONID FEODOROVITCH.) I know these experiments. I have done them myself. I used to feel a sort of effluence, and as soon as I felt it ....

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Let me beg of you to observe perfect silence.

THE STOUT LADY. Akh! I understand that. I have felt that in my own case. As soon as my attention is diverted, I can't any longer ....

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Sh-h-h!....

(*They walk about, search around the* FIRST *and* SECOND MUZHIKS *and approach the* THIRD MUZHIK. GROSSMANN *stumbles over a footstool.*)

THE BARONESS. Mais dites-moi, on le paye?

THE BARUINYA. Je ne saurais vous dire.

THE BARONESS. Mais c'est un monsieur?

THE BARUINYA. Oh! oui!

THE BARONESS. Ça tient du miraculeux, n'est-ce pas? Comment est-ce qu'il trouve?

THE BARUINYA. Je ne saurais vous dire. Mon mari vous l'expliquera. (*She catches sight of the muzhiks, looks around, and sees the* COOK.) Pardon! What does this mean? (*The* BARONESS *joins the group. To the* COOK.) Who admitted the muzhiks?

THE COOK. Yakof brought them.

THE BARUINYA. Who told Yakof to?

THE COOK. I don't know. Feodor Ivanuitch saw them.

THE BARUINYA. Leonid! (LEONID FEODOROVITCH *does not hear, being occupied with the search, and cries* Sh-h-h.)

THE BARUINYA. Feodor Ivanuitch! what does this mean? Did n't you see that I have been having the whole anteroom disinfected, and now they have infected my whole kitchen, the black bread, the kvass....

FEODOR IVANUITCH. I supposed there was no danger here; and the men are on business. They came from a long distance, from my own home.

THE BARUINYA. That 's just the trouble, they came from the country near Kursk, where even the flies are dying of diphtheria. But the main thing is.... I gave orders not to have them here in the house..... Did I give orders or not? (*She approaches the group clustered round the muzhiks.*) Be careful! Don't touch them!— they 're all infected with diphtheria! (*No one heeds her: she goes away with dignity and stands waiting motionless.*)

PETRISHCHEF (*sniffs loudly*). It may be diphtheritic; I don't know, but there 's some infection in the air. Don't you perceive it?

BETSY. There 's too much talking. Vovò, in which wallet?

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. In that one, that one!.... He 's coming to it, he 's coming to it!

PETRISHCHEF. What is it? here 's high spirits or low spirits.[1]

BETSY. This is a time when your cigarettes come in apropos. Smoke, smoke, close to me!

(PETRISHCHEF *bends down and puffs smoke at her.*)

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. He 'll find it, I tell you. What?

GROSSMANN (*nervously fumbling about the* THIRD MUZHIK). Here, here! I feel it 's here!

THE STOUT LADY. Do you feel any effluence?

(GROSSMANN *stoops down to the wallet and takes out the spoon.*)

[1] *Dukhi ili dúkhi*, "perfumes or spirits."

ALL. Bravo! (*General enthusiasm.*)

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. Well, so that 's where our spoon is found! (*To the muzhiks.*) That 's the kind of a man you are!

THIRD MUZHIK. The kind of a man? I never took any of your spoons! Why does he bother me? I never took it, never did I take it, and my soul knows I did n't! Why did he come to me? I saw he meant me no good! "Give me your wallet," he said. And I did n't take the spoon, Christ is my witness, I did n't take it.

(*The young people approach him and laugh.*)

LEONID FEODOROVITCH (*angrily to his son*). Your everlasting nonsense! (*To the* THIRD MUZHIK.) Don't worry yourself, little friend. We know you did n't take it; it was only an experiment.

GROSSMANN (*takes off the bandage and pretends to be waking up*). Water, if I may have some .... please!

(*All bustle about him.*)

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. Let us go to the coachman's room. I will show you what a fine cur I have there .... *épâtant!* What?

BETSY. What a vulgar word! Why can't you say dog?

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. Can't do it! You see I could n't say of you, "What an *épatant* female Betsy is!" .... I must say girl. So it is here. What? Is n't that so, Marya Konstantinovna? Is n't that right? (*Laughs.*)

MARYA KONSTANTINOVNA. Well, let us go!

(MARYA KONSTANTINOVNA, BETSY, PETRISHCHEF, *and* VASILI LEONIDUITCH *exeunt.*)

Scene XVIII

The Same, without Betsy, Marya Konstantinovna, Petrishchef, *and* Vasili Leoniduitch

The Stout Lady (*to* Grossmann). Tell me! how is it? Have you recovered? (Grossmann *makes no reply. To* Sakhatof.) Did you feel any effluence, Sergyei Ivanuitch?

Sakhatof. I was n't conscious of anything. But it was admirable, admirable. A perfect success.

The Baroness. Admirable! Ça ne le fait pas souffrir?

Leonid Feodorovitch. Pas le moins du monde.

The Professor (*to* Grossmann). Permit me to ask you. (*Hands him the thermometer.*) At the beginning of the experiment it was thirty-seven[1] and two. (*To the* Doctor.) So, was n't it? Now, be good enough to test his pulse. Some diminution is inevitable.

The Doctor (*to* Grossmann). Well, sir, allow me to feel your pulse. We will test it, we will test it. (*Takes out his watch and holds it in his hand.*)

The Stout Lady (*to* Grossmann). Allow me. Is it permissible to call this state in which you found yourself a sleep?

Grossmann (*wearedly*). A kind of hypnosis.

Sakhatof. Then it must be understood that you hypnotize yourself?

Grossmann. Why not? Hypnosis may be induced not only by association, by the sound of the tom-tom, for example, as with Charcot, but also by the mere entrance into the hypnotic zone.

Sakhatof. Let us grant that this is so, but at the same time it would be desirable to define more accurately what hypnosis is.

The Professor. Hypnosis is the phenomenon of the transformation of one energy into another.

Grossmann. Charcot does not define it so.

[1] Réaumur.

SAKHATOF. Excuse me, excuse me. This is your definition, but Liébault himself told me ....

THE DOCTOR (*letting go his wrist*). Very good, very good; all I want now is the temperature.

THE STOUT LADY (*pushing forward*). No, excuse me. I agree with Alekseï Vladimirovitch. And here is the very best proof of all for you. When after my illness I lay unconscious, I felt a great necessity upon me to talk. As a general thing I am very silent, but now appeared this impulse to talk, and talk, and they all told me that I talked so that it surprised them all. (*To* SAKHATOF.) However, I believe I interrupted you?

SAKHATOF (*with dignity*). Not at all! Go on, pray!

THE DOCTOR. Pulse eighty-two; the temperature has risen by three one hundredths.

THE PROFESSOR. Now, that's the very proof that we wanted. It was bound to be so. (*Takes out a notebook and writes in it.*) Eighty-two, was n't it? And thirty-seven and five. As soon as hypnosis is evoked, then infallibly there is increased action of the heart.

THE DOCTOR. As a physician I can testify that your prediction is fully confirmed.

THE PROFESSOR (*to* SAKHATOF). You were saying?....

SAKHATOF. I was going to say that Liébault himself told me that hypnosis is only a special psychical condition augmenting suggestibility.

THE PROFESSOR. Moreover, Liébault is far from being an authority, and Charcot has followed it up on all sides and has proved that hypnosis is produced by a blow, a trauma ....

SAKHATOF. Well, I don't deny Charcot's labors. I know him too. I only said what Liébault said to me.

GROSSMAN (*growing excited*). In the Salpétrière there were three thousand sick, and I took the full course.

THE PROFESSOR. Excuse me, gentlemen, this is not to the point.

TOGETHER

THE STOUT LADY (*putting herself forward*). I will explain it to you in two words. When my husband was sick, all the doctors gave him up ....

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Come, let us go into the house. Baroness, allow me!

(*Exeunt omnes, talking together, and interrupting one another.*)

SCENE XIX

The THREE MUZHIKS, FEODOR IVANUITCH, TANYA, *the* OLD MAN-COOK (*on the stove*), LEONID FEODOROVITCH, *and the* BARUINYA

THE BARUINYA (*detains* LEONID FEODOROVITCH *by the sleeve*). How many times I have begged you not to make arrangements in the house! All you know is your own stupidities, but I have charge of the house. You'll infect us!

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Who will? What do you mean? I don't understand at all.

THE BARUINYA. Here are men sick with diphtheria spending the night in the kitchen, where there's constant coming and going between the house.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. But I ....

THE BARUINYA. What about you?

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. But I don't know what you mean.

THE BARUINYA. As a father of a family, you ought to know. You can't do this.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. I did not think .... I thought ....

THE BARUINYA. It 's disgusting to hear you. (LEONID FEODOROVITCH *remains silent. To* FEODOR IVANUITCH.) Have them out of here at once! Don't let them stay in my kitchen. This is horrible! No one heeds me, just out of spite. .... I send them away, and here they are let in here! (*She grows more and more agitated and almost in tears.*) All out of spite! all out of spite. And with my illness. .... Doctor, doctor! Piotr Petrovitch .... and he 's gone!

(*Bursts into tears and leaves the kitchen, followed by* LEONID FEODOROVITCH.)

Scene XX

The Three Muzhiks, Tanya, Feodor Ivanuitch, *the* Cook, *and the* Old Man-cook (*on the stove*). (Tableau. *All stand silent a long time*)

Third Muzhik. Now may God have mercy on them! If we don't look out, we shall fall into the hands of the police. In all my life I never went to court. Let's go to our lodgings, boys.

Feodor Ivanuitch (*to* Tanya). What *is* to be done?

Tanya. It's no consequence,[1] Feodor Ivanuitch. Take them to the coachman's room.

Feodor Ivanuitch. How take them to the coachman's room? Even as it is, the coachman is complaining; it's full of dogs!

Tanya. Well, then, to the dvornik's room.

Feodor Ivanuitch. And suppose they find it out?

Tanya. They won't find anything out. Be at ease on that score, Feodor Ivanuitch. Can we drive them out at night? They would n't find their way at this time.

Feodor Ivanuitch. All right; do as you think best; only don't let them be here any longer. (*Exit.*)

Scene XXI

The Three Muzhiks, Tanya, *the* Cook, *and the* Old Man-cook. (*The muzhiks pick up their wallets*)

The Old Man-cook. Vish! cursed devils! So fat and comfortable.... Devils!

The Cook. Hush you there! Lucky you were n't seen!

Tanya. So come on, little uncles, into the dvornik's room.

[1] *Nitchevo* again.

First Muzhik. Well, what about our affair? What do you think, for instance, about the signature? Will he put his hand to it? Do you think we may hope?

Tanya. We shall know all about it within an hour.

Second Muzhik. Will you be sharp enough?

Tanya (*laughs*). As God may grant!

Curtain

ACT III

The action takes place the evening of the same day in the small parlor where Leonid Feodorovitch's *experiments are always conducted.*

Scene I

Leonid Feodorovitch *and the* Professor

Leonid Feodorovitch. What think you, shall we risk the séance with our new medium?

The Professor. Certainly. The medium is undoubtedly strong. The main thing to be desired is that the mediumistic séance shall take place this same day with the same persons. Grossmann certainly ought to show himself very susceptible to the influence of the mediumistic energy, and then the connection and unity of the phenomenon will be still more evident. You will see that if the medium is as powerful as before, Grossmann will vibrate!

Leonid Feodorovitch. All right, then, I will send for Semyon, and invite those who wish to see it.

The Professor. Yes, yes, I only want to make a few notes. (*Takes his note-book and writes.*)

Scene II

The Same, and Sakhatof

Sakhatof. Yonder in Anna Pavlovna's room they are playing whist, but I as a man unattached .... and moreover interested in the séance, come to join you here. .... Tell me, will there be a séance.

Leonid Feodorovitch. There will be, there certainly will be.

Sakhatof. How will you get along without the mediumistic power of Mr. Kapchitch?

Leonid Feodorovitch, Vous avez la main heureuse. Fancy, that very muzhik whom I told you of, proved to be an undoubted medium!

Sakhatof. Indeed! Oh, yes, that is especially interesting.

Leonid Feodorovitch. Yes, yes. After dinner we made a little preliminary test with him.

Sakhatof. Did you succeed in doing anything and feeling convinced?

Leonid Feodorovitch. Fully, and he proved himself to be a medium of unusual power.

Sakhatof (*incredulous*). Indeed!

Leonid Feodorovitch. It seems that it has been remarked long ago among the domestics. He sits down to his cup, and the spoon of its own accord hops into his hand. (*To the* Professor.) Had you heard of that?

The Professor. No; I certainly had not heard of that.

Sakhatof (*to the* Professor). But still you admit the possibility of such phenomena?

The Professor. What phenomena?

Sakhatof. Well, in general, spiritistic, mediumistic, in general supernatural phenomena?

The Professor. The question is what we call supernatural. When a piece of stone — mind you, not a living man — attracted a nail, how did this phenomenon seem to the observer, as natural or supernatural?

SAKHATOF. Yes, assuredly; but such phenomena as the attraction of a magnet constantly repeat themselves.

THE PROFESSOR. It is exactly the same here. The phenomenon repeats itself, as we call it, and we institute an examination of it. Moreover, we subject the phenomena, when once they are investigated, to the laws that are common to other phenomena. Phenomena seem supernatural simply because the causes of the phenomena are ascribed to the medium himself. But you see that is incredible. The phenomena are not produced by the medium, but by a spiritual energy through the medium, and this is a great difference. The whole thing lies in the law of equivalency.

SAKHATOF. Yes, assuredly, but....

SCENE III

The Same, and TANYA (*enters and stands behind the portière*)

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Only you must know one thing, that as with Home and Kapchitch, so now with this medium, we must not take anything for granted. It may not prove a success, and it may be even a perfect materialization.

SAKHATOF. Even a materialization? What kind of a materialization can there be?

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Such a kind that a dead person, your father, your grandfather, will take you by the hand, give you something, or some one will suddenly be lifted into the air, as happened last time at our house with Alekseĭ Vladimirovitch.

THE PROFESSOR. Assuredly, assuredly. But the main thing is in the explanation of the phenomena and their subjection to general laws.

Scene IV

The Same, and the Stout Lady

The Stout Lady. Anna Pavlovna has permitted me to join you.

Leonid Feodorovitch. We beg of you!

The Stout Lady. How fagged Grossmann seems! He can't hold a cup. Did you notice how pale he grew .... (*to the* Professor) the moment he came near it? I noticed it instantly; I was the first to mention it to Anna Pavlovna.

The Professor. Undoubtedly the loss of vital energy.

The Stout Lady. Now I tell you this should not be abused. Would you believe it: a hypnotizer suggested to a lady, a friend of mine, Vierotchka Konshin — why, you know her — to stop smoking, and her back began to pain her.

The Professor (*tries to begin to speak*). The change of temperature and the pulse evidently show ....

The Stout Lady. Permit me, one minute; I say to her; it is better to smoke than to suffer so with the nerves. Of course, smoking is injurious and I should like to get out of the habit of it, but what's the use, I can't do it. I once went two weeks without smoking, and then I could n't hold out any longer.

The Professor (*again makes an attempt to speak*). Undoubtedly show ....

The Stout Lady. But no, permit me. Only two words: You say that there is a loss of power. And I wanted to say that when I traveled by post, ... the roads used to be horrible — you don't remember so long ago as that, but I have made the observation, and say what you please, our nervousness all comes from the railways. For example, I can't sleep on the road .... you might kill me, but I don't go to sleep.

The Professor (*again begins, but the* Stout Lady *gives him no chance to speak*). The loss of power ....

Sakhatof (*smiling*). Yes, yes.

(LEONID FEODOROVITCH *rings*)

THE STOUT LADY. For one, two, three nights I won't sleep a wink, and still I can't go to sleep.

SCENE V

The Same, and GRIGORI

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Please tell Feodor to get everything in readiness for our séance, and summon Semyon, the butler's assistant, Semyon — do you understand?

GRIGORI. I understand. (*Exit.*)

SCENE VI

LEONID FEODOROVITCH, *the* PROFESSOR, *the* STOUT LADY, *and* TANYA (*hidden*)

THE PROFESSOR (*to* SAKHATOF). The change of temperature and the pulse have shown a loss of vital energy. The same thing will take place also in mediumistic phenomena. The law of the conservation of energy....

THE STOUT LADY. Yes, yes; I only wanted to add that I am very glad that a simple muzhik has proved to be a medium. It 's beautiful. I always said that the Slavyanophiles....

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Meantime let us go into the drawing-room.

THE STOUT LADY. Permit me! I will tell you in two words: the Slavyanophiles are right, but I always said to my husband that such a tendency must not be exaggerated. The golden mean, you know. But how is it possible that everything is good among the people, when I myself have seen....

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Would you not like to go into the drawing-room?

THE STOUT LADY. Here is a young boy already taking to drink. I gave him such a scolding. And he was thankful to me afterwards. They are children; and children, I have always maintained, need both love and severity. (*Exeunt omnes, talking.*)

SCENE VII

TANYA (*alone, comes out from behind the door*)

TANYA. Akh! if it would only succeed! (*She fastens some threads.*)

SCENE VIII

TANYA *and* BETSY

BETSY (*enters hastily*). Papa not here. (*Looks at* TANYA.) What are you doing here?

TANYA. Oh, I, Lizavieta Leonidovna, I only came in, I wanted .... I only happened to come in .... (*confused*).

BETSY. Is n't the séance to take place here presently? (*Notices* TANYA *drawing in threads, looks at her sharply, and suddenly bursts out laughing.*) Tanya, it is you who have been doing all these things! Now don't deny it! And it was you that time! It was, honestly, was n't it?

TANYA. Lizavieta Leonidovna, dear heart!

BETSY (*in rapture*). Akh! how good this is! I never dreamed of such a thing. But why did you do it?

TANYA. Baruinya! dear! don't betray me!

BETSY. Why, no! not for anything! I 'm awfully glad! But how do you do it?

TANYA. This is the way I do it: I hide, and when the lights are out I creep out and do it.

BETSY (*points to the thread*). And what is that for? No, you need n't tell me, I understand; you take hold of it ....

TANYA. Lizavieta Leonidovna, dear heart, I will tell

you everything. When I did it before I did it for fun, but now I have some business to accomplish.

BETSY. How? What? What sort of business?

TANYA. Well, you saw how the muzhiks came out and wanted to buy land, but your papasha would n't sell it them, and would n't sign the paper, and gave it back to them. Feodor Ivanuitch says the spirits forbade it. And so I invented a scheme.

BETSY. Akh! how clever you are! Do it, do it.... But how were you going to do it?

TANYA. This was what I thought of; as soon as they put out the lights I shall begin to rap, to fling things about, to touch them on the head with the thread, and finally I shall flap the paper on the floor.... I have it with me.... and fling it on the table.

BETSY. Well, what then?

TANYA. Why, they will be surprised. The muzhiks had the paper and suddenly it is here! And then I command....

BETSY. Well, you see, Semyon is the medium to-day.

TANYA. So I command him.... (*She can't speak for laughing.*) I command him to choke with his hand whoever came near him. Only not your papasha — he would n't dare to do that — but let him choke any of the others, until he will sign.

BETSY (*laughs*). That is n't the way they do. The medium himself does n't do anything.

TANYA. No matter; it 's all one.... perhaps even so it will come out all right.

SCENE IX

TANYA *and* FEODOR IVANUITCH. (BETSY *makes a sign to* TANYA *and goes away*)

FEODOR IVANUITCH (*to* TANYA). What are you doing here?

TANYA. I came to see you, Feodor Ivanuitch, batyushka....

FEODOR IVANUITCH. What is it you want?

TANYA. I came to see you about that affair of mine which I spoke to you about.

FEODOR IVANUITCH (*laughing*). I made the proposal, I made it, and we shook hands on it, but we haven't drunk it down yet.

TANYA (*squeals*). Are you telling me the truth?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. I tell you honestly. He says, "I'll consult with the old woman, and then as God wills."

TANYA. Did he say so? (*Squealing.*) Akh! galubchik, Feodor Ivanuitch, I'll pray God for you as long as I live.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Well, all right, all right! No time for that now! I'm told to get things ready for the séance.

TANYA. Let me help you. What have you got to get ready?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. What? Why, this: a table in the middle of the room, chairs, a guitar, a harmonica. A lamp is not needed, candles.

TANYA (*arranges everything with* FEODOR IVANUITCH). This way? The guitar here, the inkstand here.... (*sets it down*). This way?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Do they really have Semyon sit here?

TANYA. It must be, you see. They 've had him before.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Marvelous! (*Puts on his pince-nez.*) Is he clean?

TANYA. How do I know?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Well, then, you might....

TANYA. What, Feodor Ivanuitch.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Go, get the nail-brush and some Tridas soap.... you might get them from my room.... and trim his talons for him and wash him up spick and span.

TANYA. He can wash himself.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Well, you can at least tell him. And tell him to put on clean linen.

TANYA. Very well, Feodor Ivanuitch. (*Exit.*)

Scene X

Feodor Ivanuitch (*alone, sits in a chair*)

Feodor Ivanuitch. Learned, learned, especially Alekseï Vladimirovitch, he's a professor; but still I have my powerful suspicions of him. Coarse, popular superstitions are combated: faith in domovois, wizards, witches.... But if these things are investigated, it all comes to the same superstitions. Well, is it possible that the souls of the dead can talk and play on the guitar? Either they fool other people or themselves. This business with Semyon one can't make anything out of. (*Examines an album.*) Here is their spiritualistic album. Now, is it possible that they can take a photograph of a ghost? Now here's a picture — a Turk and Leonid Feodorovitch sitting together. .... Marvelous weakness of man.

Scene XI

Feodor Ivanuitch *and* Leonid Feodorovitch

Leonid Feodorovitch (*entering*). Tell me, is everything ready?

Feodor Ivanuitch (*gets up without haste*). All ready. (*Smiling.*) Only I don't know whether your new medium may not put you in an unpleasant position, Leonid Feodorovitch.

Leonid Feodorovitch. No, Alekseï Vladimir and I have already experimented with him. He's a wonderfully powerful medium.

Feodor Ivanuitch. I don't know anything about it. But is he clean? You probably haven't taken care to have him wash his hands. That wouldn't do at all.

Leonid Feodorovitch. His hands? Ah, yes. You think they are not clean?

Feodor Ivanuitch. Why, yes, he's a muzhik. There'll be ladies here, and Marya Vasilyevna.

Leonid Feodorovitch. Excellent.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. There 's another thing I should like to report to you. Timofeï, the coachman, came to me to complain that he could n't keep clean on account of the dogs.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH (*arranging objects on the table absent-mindedly*). What dogs?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. A troïka of greyhounds was brought to-day for Vasili Leoniduitch, and they 've been taken to the coachman's quarters.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH (*with vexation*). Tell Anna Pavlovna; let her do what she pleases; I have no time for such things.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. But you know her passion. ....

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Let her do as she pleases. He gives me nothing but annoyance. .... And I have no time.

SCENE XII

The Same, and SEMYON (*in a sleeveless jacket, enters smiling*)

SEMYON. You ordered me to come.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Yes, yes. Show me your hands. Well, they 'll do, they 'll do. Now, little friend, do as you did before; sit down and give yourself up to your feeling. And put all thoughts out of your mind.

SEMYON. What thoughts should I have? The more one thinks, the worse it is.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. There, there, there! The less the consciousness, the stronger the force. Don't think, but give yourself up to your mood; if you want to sleep, sleep; if you want to walk, walk. Do you understand?

SEMYON. Certainly I understand! It does n't require much sharpness.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. But above all .... don't be confused. You yourself might be surprised. You understand, that just as we live, so an invisible world of spirits lives around us here.

FEODOR IVANUITCH (*correcting him*). Invisible consciousnesses: do you understand?

SEMYON (*laughs*). Of course I understand! As you put it, it is very simple.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. You may rise into the air or something else may happen .... don't be afraid.

SEMYON. Why should I be afraid? All that is possible.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Well, then I'll go and call them all. .... Is everything ready?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. I think so.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. The slates?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. They're down-stairs; I'll fetch them. (*Exit.*)

SCENE XIII

LEONID FEODOROVITCH *and* SEMYON

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Now that's very good. So then, don't be confused, and feel perfectly free.

SEMYON. Shall I take off my jacket? I should feel freer.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Your jacket? No, no; it is not necessary. (*Exit.*)

SCENE XIV

SEMYON *alone*

SEMYON. She has told me to do the same things again, and she's going to fling things around, too. How is it she's not afraid?

SCENE XV

SEMYON *and* TANYA

TANYA (*enters in her stocking feet, in a dress the color of wall paper.* SEMYON *laughs.* TANYA *hushes him*). Sh-h! They'll hear! Here, fasten these matches to your fingers as you did before. (*He fastens them on.*) Tell me, now, do you understand everything?

SEMYON (*bending his fingers*). First and foremost, dampen the matches. Wave them — that's one. Sec-

ond, chatter my teeth, this way — that 's two. But I 've forgotten the third.

TANYA. And the third is the most important point. Now remember: when the paper falls on the table, I will ring the bell besides — instantly spread out your arms this way — open them wider, and seize any one. Any one who sits near, seize him! And as soon as you have seized some one, squeeze this way! (*she laughs*) whether lady or gentleman, you know — squeeze, squeeze hard and don't let go, just as if you were asleep; then gnash your teeth or roar this way .... (*she roars*), and when I play on the guitar, then pretend to wake up, stretch yourself, you know how, — then you are awake. .... Will you remember it all?

SEMYON. I 'll remember it all, only it 's killingly funny!

TANYA. But don't you laugh. Still, if you laugh — there 'll be no harm done. They 'll think it 's all in your dream! Only one thing — don't really go to sleep when they put out the lights.

SEMYON. Never fear, I 'll pull my ears.

TANYA. Now keep your eyes open, Semotchka, galubchik! Be sure and do everything; don't be afraid. He 'll sign the paper, you 'll see. They 're coming .... (*She creeps under the divan.*)

SCENE XVI

SEMYON *and* TANYA. *Enter* GROSSMANN, *the* PROFESSOR, LEONID FEODOROVITCH, *the* STOUT LADY, SAKHATOF, *and the* BARUINYA. SEMYON *stands at the door*

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. We beg your favor, all unbelievers! In spite of the fact that the medium is new and accidental, I expect some remarkable manifestations this time.

SAKHATOF. Very, very interesting!

THE STOUT LADY (*regarding* SEMYON). Mais il est très-bien.

THE BARUINYA. As the butler's muzhik — yes, but only ....

SAKHATOF. Wives always disbelieve in their husbands' doings. You don't allow it at all, do you?

THE BARUINYA. Of course not. In Kapchitch, to be sure, there is something special, but God only knows what it is.

THE STOUT LADY. No, permit me, Anna Pavlovna, it is impossible to decide the matter in this way. Before I was married I had a remarkable dream. Dreams, you know, are such things that you never know when they begin, or when they end; and I had such a dream ....

SCENE XVII

The Same, VASILI LEONIDUITCH *and* PETRISHCHEF *enter*

THE STOUT LADY. And much was revealed to me by that dream. Nowadays such young men as these .... (*She points to* PETRISHCHEF *and* VASILI LEONIDUITCH) deny everything.

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. But I tell you I don't deny anything at all. What?

SCENE XVIII

The Same. Enter BETSY *and* MARYA KONSTANTINOVNA, *and enter into conversation with* PETRISHCHEF

THE STOUT LADY. But how is it possible to deny the supernatural? They say it does not accord with reason. Well, maybe reason is dull, then what? You see once on Sadovaya Strect — you have heard about it? .... they had manifestations every evening. My husband's brother, how do you call it .... not beau-frère, but in Russian — not *svyokor*,[1] but something like it — I never can remember those Russian words — why he went there three nights in succession, and still he did n't see anything, and so I say ....

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Now tell us, who is it; who is it that 's going to remain?

[1] *Svyokor* means the husband's father.

THE STOUT LADY. I, I!

SAKHATOF. I!

THE BARUINYA (*to the* DOCTOR). Are n't you going to remain?

THE DOCTOR. Yes, I must see for once, at least, what Alekseï Vladimirovitch finds in it. It 's impossible to deny it without proof.

THE BARUINYA. Then I must really take some this evening?

THE DOCTOR. Take what?.... Oh, yes, the powders. Yes, take them, if you will. Yes, yes, take them.... Yes, I will call.

THE BARUINYA. Yes, if you will. (*In a loud voice.*) When you have finished, messieurs et mesdames, you will be kind enough to come to my room to recover from your emotion; and we can finish our whist besides.

THE STOUT LADY. Certainly.

SAKHATOF. Yes, yes. (*Exit the lady of the house.*)

SCENE XIX

The Same, without the BARUINYA

BETSY (*to* PETRISHCHEF). I tell you, you 'd better stay. I promise you some extraordinary things. Do you want to wager?

MARYA KONSTANTINOVNA. Why, do you believe in it?

BETSY. This time I do.

MARYA KONSTANTINOVNA (*to* PETRISHCHEF). And do you believe?

PETRISHCHEF. "Your wily vows I trust them not. I trust them not." Well, yes, if Yelisavieta Leonidovna bids me.....

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. Let us remain, Marya Konstantinovna. What? I 'm thinking up something *épatant?*

MARYA KONSTANTINOVNA. No, don't you say anything ridiculous. You see I can't hold in.

VASILI LEONIDUITCH (*aloud*). I will remain.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH (*sternly*). I will only ask those that remain not to turn this into ridicule. It 's a serious matter.

PETRISHCHEF. Do you hear? Well then, we will remain. Vovò, sit here; but look out you don't get scared.

BETSY. Yes, you laugh, but you 'll see what 'll happen.

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. What? in reality? .... There 's going to be some trick! What?

PETRISHCHEF. O, I 'm afraid, I 'm afraid. Marya Konstantinovna, I 'm afraid. .... My legs shake!

BETSY (*laughs*). Hush! (*All take seats.*)

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Sit down, sit down. Semyon, take your place.

SEMYON. I obey. (*Sits on the edge of the chair.*)

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Sit comfortably.

THE PROFESSOR. Sit squarely, in the middle of the chair, perfectly at your ease. (*Places* SEMYON *in the chair.*)

(BETSY, MARYA KONSTANTINOVNA, *and* VASILI LEONIDUITCH *roar with laughter.*)

LEONID FEODOROVITCH (*raising his voice*). I will beg those that remain not to make ridicule, and to treat the matter seriously. There might be evil consequences. Vovò, do you hear! If you can't sit quietly, go away.

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. Hush!

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Alekseï Vladimirovitch, you put him to sleep.

THE PROFESSOR. No, why should I, when Anton Borisovitch is here? He has had far more practice in this sort of thing than I have, and more power .... Anton Borisovitch!

GROSSMANN. Gentlemen, strictly speaking, I 'm not a spiritualist. I have only studied hypnosis. I have studied hypnosis, it is true, in all its known manifestations. But what is called spiritism is entirely unknown to me. From the falling asleep of the subject, I may expect certain of the phenomena of hypnosis known to me: lethargy, aboule, anæsthesia, analgesia, katalepsy,

and every kind of suggestion. Here, not these, but a different kind of phenomena are proposed for our investigation; and therefore it would be desirable to know the nature of the expected phenomena, and what scientific significance they have.

SAKHATOF. I fully coincide with Mr. Grossmann's views. Such an exposition would be very interesting.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH (*to the* PROFESSOR). I think, Alekseï Vladimirovitch, you would not refuse to give us a brief explanation.

THE PROFESSOR. Why, I might expound it, if this is desired. (*To the* DOCTOR.) And will you please take the temperature and the pulse. My exposition will unavoidably be superficial and brief.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Yes, brief, brief. ...

THE DOCTOR. Directly. (*Takes his thermometer and gives it to* SEMYON.) There, my galliard! (*Arranges it.*)

SEMYON. As you wish.

THE PROFESSOR (*getting up and addressing the* STOUT LADY, *but afterward sitting down*). Gentlemen: The phenomenon which we are investigating is usually represented on the one side as something new; on the other side as something outside the rank of natural conditions. Neither the one nor the other is correct. This phenomenon is not new, but it is as old as the world, and it is not supernatural, but is wholly subjected to the same eternal laws that everything else in existence obeys. This phenomenon is usually defined as communication with the spirit world. This definition is not accurate. According to this definition the spirit world is put in opposition to the material world; this is not correct. There is no such antithesis. The two worlds are so closely connected that there is no possibility of drawing a line of demarcation separating one world from the other. We say: matter is composed of molecules....

PETRISHCHEF. Tiresome matter. (*Whispering, laughter.*)

THE PROFESSOR. (*Pausing, and then continuing.*) Molecules are composed of atoms, but atoms, having no dimensions, are in reality nothing but points for the ap-

plication of force. That is, strictly speaking, not force, but energy — that same energy which is just as much a unity, just as indestructible as matter. But as matter is one, while its forms are varied, so is it with energy. Till within recent times only four forms of energy, each convertible one into another, have been known to us: dynamic, thermal, electrical, and chemical. But the four forms of energy are far from exhausting all the variety of its manifestations. The aspects of energy are multitudinous in their manifestations, and one of these new, little-known aspects of energy is what we are investigating. I speak of this energy as mediumism. (*Again whispering and laughter in the young folks' corner. The* PROFESSOR *pauses, and, after glancing round sternly, continues.*) Mediumistic energy has been known to mankind since very early times: predictions, prognostications, presentiments, visions — and many other things — all these are nothing else than the manifestations of mediumistic energy. But the energy itself has not been recognized as such until the most recent times. Since there has come to be a knowledge of that medium, the vibrations of which produce mediumistic phenomena, and as the phenomena of light were inexplicable as long as there was no knowledge of the imponderable substance — ether — exactly so the mediumistic phenomena seemed mysterious until the truth now established beyond a question became known, that in the interstices of the particles of the ether exists another imponderable substance still more rarefied than ether, and not subject to the law of the three dimensions. .... (*Again whispering, laughter, and squeaking. The* PROFESSOR *again looks around sternly.*)

And just exactly as mathematical calculations have demonstrated beyond dispute the existence of the imponderable ether, giving rise to the phenomena of light and electricity, exactly so the brilliant series of most delicate experiments conducted by the gifted Herman, by Schmidt, and Joseph Schmatzhofen, unquestionably demonstrate the existence of that substance which fills the universe, and may be called the psychic ether.

THE STOUT LADY. Yes, now I understand. How thankful I am ....

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Yes; but is it not possible, Alekseï Vladimirovitch, to — to shorten just a little?

THE PROFESSOR (*not heeding him*). Thus a series of strictly scientific experiments and investigations, as I have had the honor of explaining to you, has made clear to us the laws of mediumistic phenomena. These experiments have made clear to us that the submersion of certain individuals into the hypnotic condition, which is different from ordinary sleep only in this, that by the submersion into this sleep the physiological activity is not only not lowered, but is always raised, as we have just seen, — it has been established that the submersion of any subject whatever into this condition infallibly brings with it certain perturbations in the psychic ether — perturbations perfectly analogous to those produced by the submersion of a solid body into a liquid. These perturbations are what we call mediumistic phenomena. .... (*Laughter, whispering.*)

SAKHATOF. This is perfectly correct and comprehensible; but allow me to ask, if, as you are pleased to say, the submersion of the medium in a sleep produces perturbations of the psychic ether, then why are these perturbations always produced, as is usually presupposed at spiritualistic séances, by the manifestation of the activity of the souls of the departed?

THE PROFESSOR. Well, it is because the particles of this psychic ether are nothing else than the souls of the living, of the dead, and of the unborn, so that every agitation of this psychic ether inevitably produces a motion of its particles. These particles are nothing else than men's souls, which by this motion come into mutual communication.

THE STOUT LADY (*to* SAKHATOF). What don't you understand in that? It is so simple..... I thank you very, very warmly!

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. It seems to me that now all is clear and we may begin.

THE DOCTOR. The young man is in perfectly normal

condition: temperature thirty-seven and two; pulse seventy-four.

THE PROFESSOR (*takes out his note-book and writes*). Confirmation of what I have had the honor to communicate may be had in the fact that the submersion in sleep will inevitably, as we have just seen, bring about an increase in temperature and pulse just exactly as in hypnosis.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Yes, yes, excuse me; I only wanted to say to Sergyeï Ivanuitch in answer to his question how we know that the souls of the departed communicate with us: — We know this because the spirit which comes to us tells us in so many words — just as simply as I am speaking now — tells us who he is and why he came, where he is, and whether all is well with him. At the last séance there was a Spaniard, Don Castillos, and he told us everything. He told us who he is, and when he died, and how hard it is for him because he took part in the Inquisition. Moreover, he communicated to us what was taking place at the very time he was speaking to us, and precisely at the very time when he was talking to us he was to be born again on earth, and so he could not finish the conversation that he had begun with us. .... But now you will see for yourself. ....

THE STOUT LADY. Akh, how interesting! Maybe the Spaniard has been born in our house and is a baby now!

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Very possible!

THE PROFESSOR. I think it is time we should begin.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. I only wanted to say ....

THE PROFESSOR. It is late already.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Very well, then. Then we may begin. Be kind enough, Anton Borisovitch, to put the medium to sleep.

GROSSMANN. How do you wish that I put the subject to sleep? There are many methods employed. There is Brady's method, there is the Egyptian symbol, there is Charcot's method.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. It 's all the same, I think.

THE PROFESSOR. It is immaterial.

GROSSMANN. Then I will employ my own method which I demonstrated at Odessa.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Please do so.

(GROSSMANN *waves his hands over* SEMYON. SEMYON *closes his eyes and stretches.*)

GROSSMANN (*observes*). He is going to sleep..... He has gone to sleep. A remarkably rapid approach of hypnosis. Apparently the subject has already entered into the anesthetic condition. A remarkably, extraordinarily impressionable subject, and might be subjected to an interesting experiment..... (*He sits down, stands up, and sits down again.*) Now you might run a needle through his hand. If you wish....

THE PROFESSOR (*to* LEONID FEODOROVITCH). Do you notice what an effect the medium's sleep has on Grossmann? He begins to vibrate.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Yes, yes..... Now we may put out the lights, may we not?

SAKHATOF. But why is darkness necessary?

THE PROFESSOR. Darkness? Well, because darkness is one of the conditions whereby the mediumistic energy is produced, just as a certain temperature is the condition of certain manifestations of chemical or dynamical energy.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. But not always. To many, and to me, they have appeared in candle light, and even in the sunlight.

THE PROFESSOR (*interrupting*). May we put out the lights?

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Yes, yes. (*Puts out the lights.*) Gentlemen! now I ask your attention.

(TANYA *creeps out from under the divan, and gets hold of the thread fastened to a bracket.*)

PETRISHCHEF. That Spaniard amused me! How in the middle of the conversation he came down on our heads — how do you say? *piquer une tête.*

BETSY. No, you just wait, and see what will happen!

PETRISHCHEF. All I'm afraid of is that Vovò will grunt like a pig.

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. Do you want me to? I'll do it. ....

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Gentlemen! I beg you not to talk, please. .... (*Silence.*)

(SEMYON *laps his finger, rubs it over his knuckles, and brandishes his hand in the air.*)

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. A light! Did you see the light?

SAKHATOF. A light? Yes, yes, I see it! but allow me. ....

THE STOUT LADY. Where? where? Akh! I did not see it! There it is! Akh! ....

THE PROFESSOR (*to* LEONID FEODOROVITCH *in a whisper, pointing to* GROSSMANN, *who is in motion*). You remark how he is vibrating: a twofold force.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH (*to the* PROFESSOR). That is he!

SAKHATOF. Who is he?

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. The Greek Nikolas. It's his light. Isn't that so, Alekseï Vladimirovitch?

SAKHATOF. What is the Greek Nikolas?

THE PROFESSOR. A Greek who used to be a monk at Tsargrad in the time of Constantine.

THE STOUT LADY. Where is he, where is he? I don't see him.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. I can't see him any longer. .... Alekseï Vladimirovitch, he always seems especially well disposed to you. Question him.

THE PROFESSOR (*in a peculiar voice*). Nikolas, is that you?

(TANYA *raps twice on the wall.*)

LEONID FEODOROVITCH (*joyously*). It's he, it's he!

THE STOUT LADY. Aï, aï! I'm going away!

SAKHATOF. Why is it supposed that it is he?

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Why, the two raps. An affirmative answer; otherwise he would have kept still! (*Silence.*)

(*Suppressed laughter in the young people's corner.* TANYA *drops on the table a lamp-shade, a lead-pencil, and a pen-wiper.*)

LEONID FEODOROVITCH (*in a whisper*). Do you notice, gentlemen, here is a lamp-shade. And there's something else! A lead-pencil!.... Alekseï Vladimirovitch, a lead-pencil!

THE PROFESSOR. Good, good! I am watching both him and Grossmann. Do you notice?

(GROSSMANN *stands up and examines the objects that fell on the table.*)

SAKHATOF. Permit me, permit me. I should like to see whether the medium himself did not produce all these things.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Do you think so?.... Then sit next him, take hold of his hand. But be assured he is asleep.

SAKHATOF (*approaches, hits his head against the thread which* TANYA *lets down; he bends down terrified*). Yes .... Ah-h!.... Strange, strange! (*He approaches* SEMYON *and takes hold of his elbow.* SEMYON *roars.*)

THE PROFESSOR. Do you notice what an effect Grossmann's presence has? A new phenomenon.... must make a note of it.... (*He hurries out and writes down something; then returns.*)

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Yes.... but it is impossible to leave Nikolas without an answer; we must begin....

GROSSMANN (*gets up, approaches* SEMYON, *lifts up his hand and drops it*). Now it would be interesting to produce contraction. The subject is in complete hypnosis.

THE PROFESSOR (*to* LEONID FEODOROVITCH). Do you see, do you see?

GROSSMANN. If you wish....

THE DOCTOR. There, batyushka, permit Alekseï Vla-

dimirovitch to give his orders. .... The affair is becoming serious.

THE PROFESSOR. Let him be. He is already talking in his sleep.

THE STOUT LADY. How glad I am now that I decided to be present. It 's gruesome, but still I 'm glad, because I always said to my husband ....

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. I beg you to keep silent.

(TANYA *moves the thread over the* STOUT LADY'S *head.*)

THE STOUT LADY. Ai! ....

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. What was it, what was it?

THE STOUT LADY. He pulled my hair!

LEONID FEODOROVITCH (*in a whisper*). Don't be afraid, it's nothing; give him your hand. The hand will be cold, but I like that.

THE STOUT LADY (*hides her hand*). Not for the world!

SAKHATOF. Yes, strange, strange!

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. He is here and seeks communication. Who wishes to ask any questions?

SAKHATOF. Permit me, may I question him?

THE PROFESSOR. Do us the favor.

SAKHATOF. Do I believe or not?

(TANYA *raps twice.*)

THE PROFESSOR. The answer is affirmative.

SAKHATOF. Permit me, I will ask something more. Have I a ten-ruble note in my pocket?

(TANYA *raps several times and draws the thread along* SAKHATOF'S *head.*)

SAKHATOF. Akh! .... (*Seizes the thread and snaps it.*)

THE PROFESSOR. I would ask those present not to ask unnecessary or ridiculous questions. It is unpleasant to him.

SAKHATOF. No, permit me, I have a thread in my hand.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. A thread? Hold it. This often happens. Not only a thread but silken knots, very ancient ones.

SAKHATOF. No, but I should like to know where the thread comes from. (TANYA *flings a pillow at him.*) Permit me, permit me. Something soft hit me in the head. Let us have a light .... there 's something here ....

THE PROFESSOR. We beg you not to disturb the manifestations.

THE STOUT LADY. For God's sake, don't disturb them. I want to ask some questions. May I?

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. You may, you may. Ask your questions.

THE STOUT LADY. I wish to ask him concerning my stomach. May I? I wish to ask what I shall take, aconite or belladonna? (*Silence.*)

(*Whispering among the young people, and suddenly* VASILI LEONIDUITCH *cries like a young baby, ua! ua! Laughter; covering their noses and mouths and snorting, the young ladies with* PETRISHCHEF *run away.*)

THE STOUT LADY. Akh! it is evident that monk has been born again.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH (*in a furious, wrathful whisper*). You give us nothing but your absurd nonsense. If you can't behave yourself decently, then go.

(*Exit* VASILI LEONIDUITCH.)

SCENE XX

LEONID FEODOROVITCH, *the* PROFESSOR, *the* STOUT LADY, SAKHATOF, GROSSMANN, *the* DOCTOR, SEMYON, *and* TANYA. *Darkness and silence.*

THE STOUT LADY. Akh! What a shame! Now we can't ask him any more questions. He was born!

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Not at all. That is Vovò's nonsense. But *he* is here. Ask your questions.

THE PROFESSOR. It often happens so; these pleasantries and absurdities are a very ordinary phenomenon. I suspect that *he* is here still. However, we can ask. Leonid Feodorovitch, will you?

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. No, you, please. This has annoyed me. So unpleasant, this lack of tact. ....

THE PROFESSOR. Good, good! .... Nikolas, are you here still?

(TANYA *raps twice and rings a bell.* SEMYON *begins to bellow and opens out his arms. He seizes* SAKHATOF *and the* PROFESSOR *and chokes them.*)

THE PROFESSOR. Such an unexpected manifestation. An action on the medium himself. Such a thing has never happened before. Leonid Feodorovitch, you take the observations; it's awkward for me. He is choking me. See what Grossmann is doing. Now full attention is required.

(TANYA *flings the muzhiks' paper on the table.*)

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Something fell on the table.

THE PROFESSOR. Look out, and see what fell.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. A paper! a folded sheet of paper! (TANYA *throws down a travelling inkstand.*) An inkstand! (TANYA *throws down a pen.*) A pen!

(SEMYON *roars, and keeps choking the men.*)

THE PROFESSOR (*strangling*). Allow me, allow me, a perfectly new phenomenon! Not the elicited mediumistic energy, but the medium, is acting! Open the inkstand, and put the pen on the paper, — he will write.

(TANYA *goes behind* LEONID FEODOROVITCH, *and strikes him on the head with the guitar.*)

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. He struck me on the head. (*He examines the table. The pen does not write yet, and the paper is folded.*)

THE PROFESSOR. Go and see what kind of a paper it is, quick! Evidently a dual force .... his and Grossmann's .... produces perturbations.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH (*takes the paper and goes to the door, and immediately returns*). Extraordinary! This

paper is the agreement with the peasants which this morning I refused to sign, and gave back to the peasants. Apparently *he* wishes me to sign it.

THE PROFESSOR. Of course, of course! Now ask him.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Nikolas! Do you wish me to?

(TANYA *raps twice.*)

THE PROFESSOR. Do you hear. Evidently, evidently.

(LEONID FEODOROVITCH *takes the pen and goes.* TANYA *raps, plays on the guitar and harmonica, and creeps back under the divan.* LEONID FEODOROVITCH *returns.* SEMYON *stretches and coughs.*)

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. He is waking up. We can have the lights again.

THE PROFESSOR (*hastily*). Doctor, doctor, please, his temperature and pulse! You will see a recrudescence of temperature and heart action manifest itself immediately.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH (*lights the candles*). Well, now, unbelievers?

THE DOCTOR (*going to* SEMYON *and putting the thermometer into his mouth*). How now, my galliard. Tell me, have you had a nap? There, now, get up and give me your hand. (*Looks at his watch.*)

SAKHATOF (*shrugs his shoulders*). I can bear witness that the medium could not have done what has taken place. But the thread?.... I should like an explanation of the thread.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. The thread, the thread? There were much more serious phenomena.

SAKHATOF. I don't know. But in any case *je reserve mon opinion.*

THE STOUT LADY. No, how can you say, "*je reserve mon opinion?*" But the youth with the wings? Why, didn't you see him? At first I thought that it was my imagination; but afterwards it was distinct, just as distinct as if it were a real body.....

SAKHATOF. I can only speak of what I saw. I did not see that, I did not see it.

THE STOUT LADY. Now why? It was perfectly distinct. And from the left-hand side the monk in black raiment was bending toward him. ....

SAKHATOF (*walks away*). What an exaggeration.

THE STOUT LADY (*turns to the* DOCTOR). You must have seen it. He rose up from near you. (*The* DOCTOR, *not heeding, continues to count* SEMYON'S *pulse. The* STOUT LADY *addresses* GROSSMANN.) And there was a light from him, especially around his dear little face .... and the expression was so sweet, so tender, really something heavenly. (*She smiles gently.*)

GROSSMANN. I saw a phosphorescent light, objects changed places, but I perceived nothing else.

THE STOUT LADY. Well, there! You express that so! It comes because you pupils of Charcot's school do not believe in the life beyond the tomb. But now no one, no one in the world shall disturb my belief in the future life. (GROSSMANN *walks away from her.*) No, no, whatever you may say, this has been one of the happiest occasions of my life. When Sarasate played and now .... Yes! (*No one heeds her. She approaches* SEMYON.) Now tell me, my young friend, what you felt. Was it very hard for you?

SEMYON (*laughs*). Rather.

THE STOUT LADY. Still you could endure it?

SEMYON. Rather. (*To* LEONID FEODOROVITCH). Shall I go now?

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Go, go!

THE DOCTOR (*to the* PROFESSOR). His pulse is just the same, but his temperature has fallen.

THE PROFESSOR. Fallen? (*Ponders, and suddenly settles it in his own mind.*) And that is the way it should have been .... there should have been a loss of heat! Twofold energy interacting had to produce something in the nature of an interference. Yes, yes!

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. I regret that complete materialization should not have taken place, but still .... Gentlemen, I beg you to go with me to the drawing-room.

THE STOUT LADY. I was especially surprised when he waved his wings, and it was plain to see how he rose.

GROSSMANN (*to* SAKHATOF). If hypnosis only were concerned, complete epilepsy might be produced. Success might be absolute.

SAKHATOF. Interesting but not perfectly convincing. That's all I can say.

ALL GO OUT TALKING TOGETHER

SCENE XXI

LEONID FEODOROVITCH *with the paper. Enter* FEODOR IVANUITCH

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Well, Feodor, what a séance we have had! wonderful! It seems that I must let the peasants have the land on the conditions they want it.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. How so?

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Why not? (*Shows him the paper.*) Fancy, the document which I handed them, made its appearance on the table. I signed it.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. How did it come there?

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Well, it came! (*Exit.*)

(FEODOR IVANUITCH *follows him out.*)

SCENE XXII

TANYA (*alone; crawls out from under the divan and laughs*)

TANYA. Ye powers![1] how frightened I was when he grabbed the thread! (*Squeals.*) Still it succeeded.... he signed!

[1] *Batyushki moĭ, galubchiki!* my little fathers, little doves!

Scene XXIII

Tanya *and* Grigori

Grigori. So you've been playing a trick on them, have you?

Tanya. What's that to you?

Grigori. Well, do you suppose the baruinya will commend you for it? No, fiddlesticks! Now I've got you. I'll tell your roguery if you don't do as I want you to!

Tanya. I won't do as you want me to, and you won't do anything to harm me!

Curtain

ACT IV

The Stage represents the same Anteroom as in the first Act

Scene I

Two Footmen (*in livery*). Feodor Ivanuitch *and* Grigori

First Footman (*in gray side-whiskers*). You are the third we've come to to-day. Lucky the reception days are all in the same neighborhood. Yours used to be on Thursdays.

Feodor Ivanuitch. They changed it to Saturday so as to have it all come on the same day, the Golovkins, the Grade-von-Grabes....

Second Footman. It's great at the Shcherbakofs, for when they have a ball, then they treat the lackeys.

Scene II

The Same. *The* Princess *and her daughter come downstairs.* Betsy *accompanies them.* *The* Princess *looks into her note-book, then at her watch, and sits on the chest.* Grigori *puts on her overshoes*

The Young Princess. No, now please come! For if you decline Dodo will decline and it will be a failure!

Betsy. I don't know. I must certainly go to Shubin's. Then the rehearsal.

The Young Princess. You 'll have time. No, please come. *Ne nous fait pas faux bond!* Fedya 'll be there and Koko.

Betsy. *J'en ai par-dessus la tête de votre Koko.*

The Young Princess. I expected to find him here. *Ordinairement il est d'une exactitude.*

Betsy. He will surely be here.

The Young Princess. Whenever I see you with him, it seems to me that he has just made or is just going to make you a proposal.

Betsy. Yes, probably it will be my fate to go through with that. And it 's so disagreeable!

The Young Princess. Poor Koko! He 's so desperately in love!

Betsy. *Cessez, les gens.*

(The Young Princess *sits on the divanchik talking in a whisper.* Grigori *puts on her overshoes.*)

The Young Princess. Till this evening then.

Betsy. I will try.

The Young Princess. Tell your papa then that I believe nothing, but that I am coming to see his new medium. Only he must let me know. *Proschaïte, ma toute belle!* (*Kisses her and goes out with her daughter.* Betsy *goes up.*)

Scene III

The Two Footmen, Feodor Ivanuitch, *and* Grigori

Grigori. I don't like to put shoes on for old women; they never bend any, they can't see over their bellies; it 's different with a young woman; it 's pleasant to hold their feet in your hand.

Second Footman. So he would choose!

First Footman. It is n't for us to choose.

Grigori. Why should n't we choose? Are n't we human beings? They think we don't understand; as soon as they begin to talk they look at me and then it 's *lay zhong*.

Second Footman. And what does that mean?

Grigori. That means in Russian: "don't speak, he understands!" The same way at table; and I do understand. You say there 's a difference .... but there is none.

First Footman. A wide difference for any one who knows.

Grigori. There 's no difference at all. To-day I 'm a lackey, but to-morrow maybe I may be living as well as any of them. And lackeys get married; have n't such things been? I must go and smoke. (*Exit.*)

Scene IV

The Same, without Grigori

Second Footman. That young man 's got gall.

Feodor Ivanuitch. An empty young fellow, who does n't know his place; he used to be a clerk .... but he got spoilt. I advised not to take him, but he pleased the baruinya .... he looks well when she drives out.

First Footman. I should like to give him to our count; he'd bring him to his place. Okh! he does n't like such weather-vanes! If a man's a lackey, let him be a lackey. Do your duty; this sort of pride is n't becoming.

Scene V

The Same. Petrishchef *comes down-stairs and takes out a cigarette*

Petrishchef (*in a brown study*). Yes, yes. My second is "Ka." Kar-tozh-ka.[1] My whole .... yes, yes. (Koko Klingel, *with a pince-nez, comes to meet him.*) Ah! Kokosha-Kartosha! whither away?

Koko Klingel. From the Shcherbakofs'. You are forever full of nonsense. ....

Petrishchef. No, listen, a charade: my first is *kin*, my second is *ka;* my whole drives calves a long distance.

Koko Klingel. Give it up, give it up! and I have no time.

Petrishchef. But where else have you to go?

Koko Klingel. Where else, indeed? To Ivin's, for the chorus must be there. Then to Shubin's; then to the rehearsal. Why, you 're to be there, are n't you?

Petrishchef. Why, of course. Both at the rehearsal and at the reversal.[2] You see, I was wild, but now I am both wild and a general.

Koko Klingel. Well, tell me how was yesterday's séance?

Petrishchef. Awfully funny! A muzhik was there, but the main thing was — it all took place in the dark. Vovò squealed like a baby. The Professor made explanations and Marya Vasilyevna gave illustrations. It was such fun! Too bad you were n't there.

Koko Klingel. I 'm afraid, *mon cher*, somehow or other you succeed in brazening it out with jests; but it always seems to me that if I should say the least little word, it would be instantly interpreted as a proposal. *Et ça ne m'arrange pas du tout, du tout. Mais du tout, du tout!*

Petrishchef. Even if you should make a proposal

[1] *Kartochka*, visiting-card; *kartoshka*, potato.

[2] *I na repetitsi i na morkovetitsi. Repeĭ* is burdock-seed; *morkov'* is a carrot.

with your predicate, nothing would come of it. So come on, let 's go to Vovò, and we 'll go to the conversal.[1]

KOKO KLINGEL. I don't understand how you can get along with such an idiot! He 's so stupid .... a perfect booby!

PETRISHCHEF. But I like him. I like Vovò, but .... "with a strange love" .... "to him, the path will ne'er be grown with grass."

(*Goes to* VASILI LEONIDUITCH'S *room.*)

SCENE VI

The TWO FOOTMEN, FEODOR IVANUITCH, *and* KOKO KLINGEL. BETSY *accompanies a* LADY *down-stairs.* KOKO *bows significantly*

BETSY (*shakes his hand as she passes. To the* LADY). Are n't you acquainted?

THE LADY. No.

BETSY. Baron Klingel .... Why were n't you here yesterday?

KOKO KLINGEL. I could not. I had n't the time.

BETSY. Too bad. It was very interesting. (*She laughs.*) You would have seen what manifestations we had. Tell me, how is your charade progressing?

KOKO KLINGEL. Oh, yes. The verses for my second are ready. Nik wrote the poetry and I the music.

BETSY. How does it go, tell me?

KOKO KLINGEL. Let me think how .... oh, yes. The knight sings to Nanna. (*Sings:*)

Kak prekrasna natura
Lyet na dushu mnye nadezhda ....
Nanna, Nanna, na, na, na![2]

THE LADY. If my second is *na*, what is my first.

KOKO KLINGEL. My first is Are — the name of a wild woman.

[1] *Red'kotitsi: red'ka* is radish, another play on *repetitsi.*
[2] How doth beautiful nature inspire hope in my soul. Nanna-na-na.

BETSY. Are — that you see is a wild woman who wants to eat the object of her love. .... (*Laughs.*) She walks, she grieves, she sings.

My appetite

KOKO KLINGEL (*interrupting*),

Fills me with spite.

BETSY (*catching him up*),

I must have food or perish.
I w-wandered round ....

KOKO KLINGEL.

But nothing found.

BETSY.

But little hope I cherish!

KOKO KLINGEL.

But there 's a raft!

BETSY.

Here comes the craft —
Two generals seek the dry land!

KOKO KLINGEL.

Two generals we are
Beneath one evil star
We drift toward the island.

And then the refrain again: —

Sud'ba nas svazala
Na ostrof posla-a-la.

THE LADY. *Charmant!*

BETSY. How stupid it is!

KOKO KLINGEL. That is its very charm.

THE LADY. Who is Are?

BETSY. I am. I act it in costume, but mamma says it is "indecent." But it is n't any more indecent than a ball dress. .... (*To* FEODOR IVANUITCH.) Tell me, is the messenger from Bourdier's here still?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Yes, he's waiting in the kitchen.

THE LADY. Well, is the word *arena?*

BETSY. You 'll see. I don't want to spoil your pleasure. *Au revoir.*

THE LADY. *Prashchaïte* — good-by. (*They bow to each other, the* LADY *goes.*)

BETSY (*to* KOKO KLINGEL). Let us go to mamma.

(BETSY *and* KOKO KLINGEL *go up-stairs.*)

SCENE VII

FEODOR IVANUITCH, *the* TWO FOOTMEN, *and* YAKOF

YAKOF (*enters from the butler's pantry with a platter, tea, and pastry; he passes through the anteroom panting; to the* FOOTMEN). My respects to you, my respects to you! (*The* FOOTMEN *bow to* FEODOR IVANUITCH.) If you would only order Grigori Mikhaïluitch to help me. I 'm bothered to death getting things ready. ....

(*Exit.*)

SCENE VIII

The Same, without YAKOF

FIRST FOOTMAN. You have a diligent man in him.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. He 's a good fellow, but he does n't please the baruinya; he 's not good enough looking she says. And only yesterday they were pitching into him because he admitted the muzhiks into the kitchen. If only they don't discharge him. But he 's a fine fellow!

SECOND FOOTMAN. What muzhiks?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. They came from our village in Kursk to buy land; it was for all night; they are townsmen of ours. One of them is the father of the butler's muzhik. Well, they took them into the kitchen. And it so happened there was some mind-reading going on; they had something in the kitchen, all the folks came down, the baruinya caught sight of them — there was a

row. "Why," says she, "these men may be infected, and here they are in the kitchen!".... She's in great fear of this infection.

Scene IX

The Same, and Grigori

Feodor Ivanuitch. Go on, Grigori, help Yakof Ivanuitch; I'll stay here alone. But he won't have time if he's alone.

Grigori. He's clumsy; that's why he doesn't have time. (*Exit.*)

Scene X

The Same, without Grigori

First Footman. What is this new-fangled thing that's just come.... these infections?.... So your mistress is afraid of them, is she?

Feodor Ivanuitch. Worse than fire! It keeps us busy here all the time, fumigating, scrubbing, and sprinkling.

First Footman. That's why the air seemed to me so close here. (*With animation.*) There's nothing like the troubles that come from these infections. It's perfectly disgusting! They even forget God! Now our barin's sister, the Princess Mosolova, lost her daughter. What happened? Why, neither her father nor her mother went into the room, and so they didn't say good-by to her. And the daughter was crying, and called them to come and say good-by.... they wouldn't go. The doctor found some infection. But there were people to look after her.... her maid and her nurse, and nothing happened to them.... both of them are alive!

Scene XI

The Same, Vasili Leoniduitch, *and* Petrishchef (*who enter with cigarettes*)

Petrishchef. Come along; I just want to catch Kokosha-Kartosha.

Vasili Leoniduitch. Your Kokosha 's a blockhead. I tell you, I can't endure him. He 's a regular good-for-nothing; a perfect chump! He has nothing to do but wander round. What?

Petrishchef. Well, just wait then; I 'll say good-by to him.

Vasili Leoniduitch. All right. I 'll go and look at the dogs, in the coachman's room. One of the curs is so ugly the coachman says he almost ate him up. What?

Petrishchef. Which ate which? The coachman would n't eat the dog, would he?

Vasili Leoniduitch. You 're forever .... joking. ....
(*Puts on his coat and exit.*)

Petrishchef. Ma-kin-tosh, Ka-tozh-ka .... Yes—yes.
(*Goes up-stairs.*)

Scene XII

The Two Footmen, Feodor Ivanuitch, *and* Yakof (*who runs across the stage at the beginning and end of the scene*)

Feodor Ivanuitch (*to* Yakof.) What is it now?

Yakof. No sandwiches! I said .... (*Goes out.*)

Second Footman. Then one time our young master[1] took sick. They immediately sent him to a hotel with his nurse, and he died there without his mother.

First Footman. Well, they have no fear of the sin. I suppose there is no getting away from God.

[1] *Barchuk;* also *barchinok*, popular diminutive of *baritch*, the son of a *barin*.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. I think so too.

(YAKOF *runs up-stairs with tartinkas.*)

FIRST FOOTMAN. And notice this; if we had to be so afraid of all men we should have to shut ourselves up within four walls, just as in a prison, and stay there!

SCENE XIII

The Same, and TANYA; *then* YAKOF

TANYA (*bows to the* FOOTMEN). How are you? (*The* FOOTMEN *bow.*) Feodor Ivanuitch, I should like to say two words to you.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Well, what is it?

TANYA. Feodor Ivanuitch, the little muzhiks have come back. ....

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Well, what of it? I gave their paper to Semyon. ....

TANYA. I have given the paper back to them, and I can't begin to tell you how grateful they are. Now all they want is to pay over the money.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Where are they?

TANYA. Yonder, standing by the doorsteps.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. All right. I'll give their message.

TANYA. I have one more request, batyushka, Feodor Ivanuitch.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. What is it?

TANYA. Now, Feodor Ivanuitch, there 's no reason for me to stay here any longer. Ask that I may be dismissed. (YAKOF *comes running in.*)

FEODOR IVANUITCH (*to* YAKOF). What is it this time?

YAKOF. Another samovar, and oranges.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Ask the housekeeper for them. (YAKOF *hurries away. To* TANYA.) What was that you were saying?

TANYA. Why, you don't need to ask. My affair is now all settled.

YAKOF (*running back*). Very few oranges.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Give them what there are. (YAKOF *runs off.*) You have not chosen a good time; why, you see what a bustle....

TANYA. But you know, Feodor Ivanuitch, there 'll never be any end to the bustle, if you wait forever.... you know it as well as I do. But my affair is for all time. Now, batyushka, Feodor Ivanuitch, you have been so good to me, be my real father, choose a convenient little time and tell them. Otherwise she 'll be angry and not give me my billet.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. But why are you in such a hurry?

TANYA. Why, Feodor Ivanuitch, my affair is all decided. I should like to visit mamenka, and then my godmother, and get things ready.... And the wedding is to take place at Krasnaya-gorka. Do tell her, batyushka, Feodor Ivanuitch.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Go away! This is not the place!

(*An elderly barin comes down-stairs and silently takes his departure with the* SECOND FOOTMAN. *Exit* TANYA.)

SCENE XIV

FEODOR IVANUITCH, FIRST FOOTMAN, *and* YAKOF

YAKOF (*enters*). Now, Feodor Ivanuitch, this is a crying shame! She wants to dismiss me. "You break everything," she says, "you forget Firka, and contrary to my wishes you admit muzhiks into the kitchen." You know yourself I knew nothing whatever about it. Only Tatyana said to me, "Take them into the kitchen," and I did n't know whose order it was.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Tell me, did she say so?

YAKOF. She just said so. Do stand up for me, Feodor Ivanuitch! One just gets his family nicely established and then has to lose his place, and it 's not so easy to find another. Feodor Ivanuitch, please!

Scene XV

Feodor Ivanuitch, *the* First Footman, *and the* Baruinya, *who accompanies an old* Countess *with false hair and teeth. The* First Footman *puts the* Countess's *cloak on for her*

The Baruinya. It is certainly so. I am truly touched.

The Countess. If my health were not so bad, I would come and see you oftener.

The Baruinya. Truly try Piotr Petrovitch. He is brusque, but there's no one like him for calming one; everything with him is so simple and clear.

The Countess. No, I'm used to mine now.

The Baruinya. Be careful!

The Countess. *Merci, mille fois merci.*

Scene XVI

The Same, *and* Grigori, *who comes rushing in from the pantry in excitement, with disheveled hair. Behind him* Semyon *is visible*

Semyon. Don't you dare come near her.

Grigori. You villain. I'll teach you to strike me! Oh, you wretch!

The Baruinya. What does this mean? Do you imagine you are in a tavern?

Grigori. I can't live on account of this coarse muzhik.

The Baruinya (*in vexation*). You've lost your senses! don't you see! (*To the* Countess.) Merci, mille fois merci! À mardi.

(*The* Countess *and* First Footman *take their departure.*)

Scene XVII

Feodor Ivanuitch, *the* Baruinya, Grigori, *and* Semyon

The Baruinya (*to* Grigori). What does this mean?

Grigori. Even if I do fulfil the duties of a lackey, I have my proper pride, and I don't allow every muzhik to lay hands on me.

The Baruinya. What happened?

Grigori. That Semyon of yours has been putting on airs because he has sat down with gentlemen. He wants to get into a fight.

The Baruinya. What do you say? What for?

Grigori. God only knows.

The Baruinya (*to* Semyon). What does this mean?

Semyon. Why is he pursuing her?

The Baruinya. Tell me what has taken place between you?

Semyon (*smiling*). Well, he's all the time following after Tanya, the chambermaid, and she won't have it. So I pushed him aside with my hand.... this way, very gently.

Grigori. Fine way of pushing one aside; he almost broke my ribs and he tore my dress-coat. And then what did he say? "The force came over me," said he, "just as it did last night." And he began to pound me!

The Baruinya (*to* Semyon). How do you dare fight in my house?

Feodor Ivanuitch. Allow me to inform you, Anna Pavlovna, that Semyon has an affection for Tanya and they have just become engaged; but Grigori — I must tell the truth — does n't behave well toward her, not honorably. And Semyon, I imagine, was indignant with him.

Grigori. Not at all. It was out of spite because I discovered their rascality.

The Baruinya. What rascality?

Grigori. Why, at the séance. All the manifestations

last night were performed, not by Semyon, but by Tanya. I myself saw her creeping out from under the divan.

THE BARUINYA. What is that? .... creeping out from under the divan?

GRIGORI. I can give you my word of honor. She also got the document and threw it on the table. If it had not been for her, the paper would not have been signed, and the land would not have been sold to the muzhiks.

THE BARUINYA. You saw it yourself?

GRIGORI. With my own eyes. Have her called, she can't deny it!

THE BARUINYA. Call her. (*Exit* GRIGORI.)

SCENE XVIII

The Same, without GRIGORI. *Behind the scenes, a confusion. The* SWISS'S *voice: "You can't go in, you can't go in!" The* SWISS *appears, the* THREE MUZHIKS *crowd past him, the* SECOND MUZHIK *in advance; the* THIRD MUZHIK *trips, falls, and puts his hand on his nose*

THE SWISS. You can't go in, go away!

SECOND MUZHIK. Why, there's no need of a fuss. We don't mean any harm, do we? We want to pay our money.

FIRST MUZHIK. Reely, as the business of putting his signature to the document has been done, all we have to do is to pay over the money and offer our thanks!

THE BARUINYA. Just wait, wait with your thanks! It was all a fraud. It is n't done with yet! The land has n't been sold yet .... Leonid! call Leonid Feodorovitch! (*Exit the* SWISS.)

Scene XIX

The Same, and Leonid Feodorovitch (*who starts to come in, but on seeing his wife and* Muzhiks *tries to go back*)

The Baruinya. No, no, please come here! I told you that you had no business to sell that land on credit, and every one told you the same thing. But you have been cheated, like the stupidest of men!

Leonid Feodorovitch. How so? I don't understand where the deception is.

The Baruinya. You ought to be ashamed of yourself. Your hair is gray, and yet you allow yourself to be cheated and turned to ridicule like a boy! You begrudge your son three hundred paltry rubles required by his social position, and you yourself, like a fool, are cheated out of thousands.

Leonid Feodorovitch. Calm yourself, Annette.

First Muzhik. All we wanted was to pay over the sum, of course. ....

Third Muzhik (*takes out the money*). Let us go, for Christ's sake!

The Baruinya. Wait, wait!

Scene XX

The Same, Grigori *and* Tanya

The Baruinya (*sternly to* Tanya). Yesterday evening were you in the parlor at the time of the séance?

(Tanya, *sighing, looks at* Feodor Ivanuitch, Leonid Feodorovitch, *and* Semyon.)

Grigori. No shuffling will avail now — when I myself saw ....

The Baruinya. Speak, were you there? I know all. Confess! I won't do anything to you. I only want to

convince him (*indicating* LEONID FEODOROVITCH). Did you throw the paper on the table?

TANYA. I don't know what answer to give. The only thing is whether I can be permitted to go home or not.

THE BARUINYA (*to* LEONID FEODOROVITCH). There, you see what a fool they make of you.

SCENE XXI

The Same; enter BETSY *at the beginning of the scene and stands unobserved*

TANYA. Let me go home, Anna Pavlovna.

THE BARUINYA. No, dear. You see, maybe you have done damage amounting to several thousands. Land has been sold which should not have been sold.

TANYA. Let me go, Anna Pavlovna.

THE BARUINYA. No, you are responsible. Such tricks cannot be allowed. We shall put it into the hands of the law.

BETSY (*interfering*). Let her go, mamma. And if you want to sue her, then you'll have to sue me too. She and I did that together last evening.

THE BARUINYA: Well, then, you may know, if you had anything to do with it, there could be only mischief in it.

SCENE XXII

The Same, and the PROFESSOR

THE PROFESSOR. How are you, Anna Pavlovna? How do you do, young lady?[1] I am bringing you a report, Leonid Feodorovitch, from the Thirteenth Congress of Spiritualists, at Chicago. A wonderful discourse by Schmidt!

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Ah, very interesting.

THE BARUINYA. I will tell you something far more interesting. It seems that this silly girl has played a trick on you and my husband. Betsy tells on herself, but

[1] *Baruishnya.*

that is in order to plague me; but an illiterate servant-girl has duped you, and you believe her! Last evening none of your manifestations were by spirits, but this girl (*pointing to* TANYA) did them all!

THE PROFESSOR (*taking off his overcoat*). What is that?

THE BARUINYA. Yes, indeed. She played the guitar in the dark, and struck my husband on the head, and played all sorts of stupid tricks on you; and has just confessed that she did.

THE PROFESSOR (*smiling*). But what does that prove?

THE BARUINYA. It proves that your mediumism is rubbish, that is what it proves!

THE PROFESSOR. Because this maid wanted to deceive, hence mediumism is rubbish, as you may please to express it. (*Smiling.*) Strange conclusion! Very possibly this maid intended to deceive; it often happens so. Maybe she even did something; but what she did she did: but what came from the mediumistic energy came from the mediumistic energy. It is even perfectly likely that what this maid did called forth, solicited, so to speak, the manifestation of the mediumistic energy, gave it definite form.

THE BARUINYA. Another lecture!....

THE PROFESSOR (*severely*). You say, Anna Pavlovna, that this maid, and possibly, also, this amiable young lady, did something; but the light which we all saw, and, in the first case, the fall in temperature, and in the second the rise in temperature, and Grossmann's excitement and vibration .... tell me, was that also done by this maid? These are facts, ... facts, Anna Pavlovna. No, Anna Pavlovna, there are things which must be investigated and fully understood in order to speak about them .... things too serious, quite too serious ....

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. How about the child which Marya Vasilyevna, and I too, saw? .... This maid couldn't have done this.

THE BARUINYA. Do you think that you have brains? .... But you are a fool!

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Well, I'm going.... Alekseï Vladimirovitch, come to my room.

(*Exit into his private room.*)

THE PROFESSOR (*shrugging his shoulders, follows him*). Yes, we are still far away from Europe!

SCENE XXIII

The BARUINYA, *the* THREE MUZHIKS, FEODOR IVANUITCH, TANYA, BETSY, GRIGORI, SEMYON, *and* YAKOF (*who enters*)

THE BARUINYA (*calling to her husband*). They cheat him like a fool! And he can't see a thing. (*To* YAKOF.) What do you want?

YAKOF. Do you wish me to lay the table for many persons?

THE BARUINYA. For many?.... Feodor Ivanuitch, take the silver from him. Then away with him! He's to blame for everything. This man will drive me into the grave. Yesterday he almost starved the poor little dog to death, and she had never done a thing to him. Nor was that sufficient for him; he let these infected muzhiks into the kitchen, and here they are again. He's to blame for everything! Away with him, instantly! away with him! Settle his accounts, settle his accounts. (*To* SEMYON.) And if you allow yourself to make such a commotion in my house again, I'll give you a lesson, you nasty muzhik!

THE SECOND MUZHIK. Well, now, if he's a nasty muzhik, there's no need of keeping him; give him his wages, and that's the end of it.

THE BARUINYA (*as she hears him, examines the* THIRD MUZHIK). Just look at him; he has an eruption on his nose, an eruption! He is sick, he is a reservoir of infection. Why, I declared last evening that they were not to be admitted, and here they are again. Drive them out!

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Tell me, shall we not take their money?

THE BARUINYA. Their money?.... Take their money, but drive them away, entirely away, this very instant! He 's perfectly putrid!

THE THIRD MUZHIK. You 're quite mistaken, matushka, by God, quite. Ask my old woman, I tell you, whether I 'm putrid. I 'm as smooth as a mirror, I tell you.....

THE BARUINYA. And still he talks!.... Away, away with you! All out of spite! No, I can't bear, I can't bear it!.... Send for Piotr Petrovitch. (*Runs out sobbing.*) (*Exeunt* YAKOF *and* GRIGORI.)

SCENE XXIV

The Same, without the BARUINYA, YAKOF, *and* GRIGORI

TANYA (*to* BETSY). My dear young lady, sweetheart,[1] what am I to do now?

BETSY. It 's all right, it 's all right. Just go home with them. I 'll attend to it. (*Exit.*)

SCENE XXV

FEODOR IVANUITCH, *the* THREE MUZHIKS, TANYA, *and the* SWISS

THE FIRST MUZHIK. How is it now, worthy sir, about the receipt of the money?

THE SECOND MUZHIK. Dismiss us now!

THE THIRD MUZHIK (*fidgeting with the money*). If I had known, I would n't, for the world, have undertaken this job. It dries one up worse than a malignant disease!

FEODOR IVANUITCH (*to the Swiss*). Bring them to my room; the abacus is there. And I 'll receive the money there, too. Go, go!

[1] *Baruishnya, galubushka.*

THE SWISS. Let us go, then, let us go!

FEODOR IVANUITCH. But thank Tanya. If it had not been for her, you would n't have had your land.

THE FIRST MUZHIK. Reely, just as she proposed to do, she carried it out.

THE THIRD MUZHIK. She has made men of us! What should we have done otherwise? We have little land — not room for cattle, not even for a hen on it! Good-by,[1] Miss Cleverness! When you come to the village, come and eat honey at my house.

THE SECOND MUZHIK. Just let me get home, I 'll set about the wedding and brew beer. Only come!

TANYA. I 'll come, I 'll come! (*Squeals.*) Semyon, is n't this nice? (*Exeunt the* MUZHIKS.)

SCENE XXVI

FEODOR IVANUITCH, TANYA, *and* SEMYON

FEODOR IVANUITCH. God bless you. Now look here, Tanya, when you have a home of your own I 'll come and visit you. Will you receive me?

TANYA. You dear fellow,[2] we will receive you like a father!

(*Hugs and kisses him.*)

CURTAIN

[1] *Prashchevaĭ* for *prashchaĭ*.
[2] *Galubchik tui moĭ*, little pigeon, thou mine.

END OF VOL. XVI.